

*The Nature of Regeneration opened,
and its absolute Necessity, in or-
der to Salvation, demonstrated,*

I N A

S E R M O N

From JOHN iii. 3.

A L S O

THE NATURE OF ADOPTION, with its
Consequent Privileges, explained, in a
SERMON on JOHN iii. 1.

By the Revd. Mr. **JOHN TENNENT**,
Late Minister of the Gospel in *Freehold, New Jersey*.

To which is added, as an APPENDIX to the first
of these DISCOURSES,

An Expostulatory Address to Saints and Sinners.

By **GILBERT TENNENT, A. M.**
Minister of the Gospel in *New Brunswick, New Jersey*.

THE SECOND EDITION.

*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though
your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow;
though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.*

Isaiah i. 18.

*Be ye Followers of God, as dear-Children, and walk in
Love.*

Ephes. v. 1.

L O N D O N:

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THE PREFACE.

THERE seems to be no Need of any other Apology for reprinting the following Discourses here at London, than to let the Readers know that it was at the Desire of some who greatly value this little Book for the Importance of the Doctrines contained in it: For though many excellent Treatises have been set forth on these Subjects of Regeneration and Adoption, yet as the Opposition to the former is carried on with as much or more Violence than ever, by the carnal Reasoners of this Age, so there is as great Need as ever to be importunate about maintaining the Doctrine of the absolute Necessity of being born again of Water and of the Spirit, as the Scriptures themselves do evidence, John iii. 5. For so great is the Prejudice to the Scripture Account of Regeneration, that several dignified Doctōrs have been at much Pains of late to make the World believe that Regeneration consists only in dedicating, sprinkling, or plunging the Body in Water at Baptism, as if that were sufficient alone to convert a Soul. And if these great Masters of our Israel have no higher Notions of Regeneration than this, it is not to be wondered at if their Followers continue to be as ignorant as Nicodemus himself.

But

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But all those who have been taught by the Spirit of God, and have felt the Power of regenerating Grace in their own Souls, when they read this Discourse, will presently perceive that the Author speaks like one in Earnest, and knew what he affirms.

As to the other Discourse on Adoption, it is full of sweet Consolation to the Heirs of Promise, but will not relish with any others.

O with what vehement Expostulation does our Author set forth the Miseries of the Unregenerate, and how beautifully the Privileges of Adoption, he himself having tasted both, as the Reader will see in the short Sketch which his Brother hath here given us of his Life.

The Churches of Christ, particularly in those Parts where he lived, had great Reason to lament their Loss in his Death; but as the great Lord of the Harvest is never at a loss to find out and qualify Pastors and Teachers, as Instruments in his Hand of bringing in and building up the Number of his Chosen; so, in particular, that Part of America is blessed by the Ministry of the holy and pious Father and Brethren of this deceased Author, the Reverend Messrs. Tennents, who continue burning and shining Lights in these Parts, as may be seen by the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journals and Letters, where very uncommon Characters are given them for Piety and Holiness.



London, February 5, 1741.

A prefatory Discourse to the
following Sermons, with a Relation of
some *Memoirs* of their AUTHOR's Con-
version and Character.

ARDON me, candid reader, if not-
withstanding the nearness of my rela-
tion to the *author* of the following ser-
mons, for the *honour* of the most high
God, and the glory of his free *grace*, I
do his *memory* the justice, and the *world* the service,
(I mean such as were not personally acquainted with
him) as to attempt, without the paint of flattery, a
modest description of his real *character*.

I am aware, that *relatives* are apt to be suspected
of partiality, in the relations they give of those they
are bound to by the ties of nature ; because through
the strength of their natural affection, their judg-
ment is apt to be *biased*, and their *biased* judg-
ment as apt to misguide their tongue, or pen, into
hyperbolical mistakes in their narratives.

I freely confess there is some reason for this su-
spicion in the general ; but is it not possible for a
relative to get his mind freed from those partial bi-
asses, so as to observe plain matters of fact, with *mo-
desty* and impartiality ? Or must their reason and
senses be rendred wholly and inviolably useless, in
such matters as concern those they are related to ?
Sure I am, they have an advantage above strangers
in this, that they can with more ease *inspect* into
the secret and more retired passages of their relations
lives, not to say that it has been the practice of some

great men, (whose example those of a meaner order are apt to follow *pro viribus*) to favour the world with an account of their relations lives and characters ; whose names, if it were needful, I could mention.

I confess I am unequal to the *task* I am engaging in, but a regard to *God's honour*, and the *good of mankind*, invite me to attempt it.

Once more, to remove the former suspicion, I can with the utmost *solemnity* assure the *reader*, that what I shall offer, shall be much below what I might in justice assert. But to proceed,

The reverend *author* of the following sermons was blessed by God (from whom every good donation flows) with a quickness of *apprehension*, copiousness of *fancy*, and fluency of *expression*. As to acquired *parts*, he made no contemptible *progress* in the knowledge of the learned languages ; as also in philosophical and theological studies, considering his years and opportunities ; which those reverend *gentlemen*, before whom he past his *trials*, gave honourable testimony to, by such an approbation of his public performances, as was suited to his distinguished *merit*. But particularly, he excelled in the *polemical* and *casuistical* parts of *divinity* : he was well known to be a keen *disputant*, and an expert *casuist*. But that which *crowned* his other attainments, and made them appear with *beauty* and *lustre* in the eyes of all judicious beholders, was his undisguised and eminent *christianity*. It pleased the God of all grace, some considerable time before his entrance into the public ministry, to work a special work of his pure grace in his heart, which in concurrence with his peculiar natural and acquired endowments, rendred him a prepared and polished *shaft* for the ministerial work. Give me leave, candid reader, to relate a few passages concerning the manner of his *conversion* to God, His

His *conviction* of sin, and the state of danger and misery he was brought into by it, was the most violent in degree of any that ever I saw. For several days and nights together, he was made to cry out in a most dolorous and affecting manner, almost every moment : the words that he frequently used in his soul-agony were these, *O my poor soul ! O my bloody lost soul ! What shall I do ? Have mercy upon me, O God, for Christ's sake !* Sometimes he was brought to the very brink of *despair*, and would conclude, surely God would never have mercy upon such a great sinner as he was ; and yet in the mean time, *observe* reader, that his life was unstained with those scandalous extravagancies, which too many (alas for it !) in the bloom of their youth are ensnared by. His natural *predominant* was the sin of passion, or rash anger, and the worst I ever knew him guilty of was some indecent *beats* this way ; which afterwards he was exceedingly humbled for, and watchful against. His passionateness cost him many a deep *sob*, heavy *groan*, and salt *tear* ; and after it pleased the blessed God to confer his free grace upon him, he was remarkably altered in this particular, and gained in a great measure the ascendant over it. Now, *reader*, considering that the manner of his life before his conversion was such, as to be free from gross enormities, the depth of his *distress* under his *conviction*, and that in *young* years, is the more remarkable, and serves to confute that vain *notion* of some carnal people, that if persons have not been profane in their lives, then they say there is no need of deep convictions and great anguish of soul, in order to a true *closure* with *Christ*. Indeed his *distress* was such as forced him to make an open *confession* of his sin to almost all that came near him ; as also to *beg* their prayers at God's *throne* in his behalf. And this he did in such a pi-

teous manner, with such a dejected frighted countenance, like that of a man going to be put upon a *rack*, or *gibbet*, or having his head upon a *block* in order to be chopp'd off; and with such dolorous *groans*, and vehement *importunity*, did he implore *heaven* for *relief* and pardon, that even some strangers who came to see him were much affected therewith, the *tears* trickling down their cheeks like *hail*. At the beginning of his *conviction*, I endeavoured to heighten it, by representing to him the particular and heinous aggravations of those sins I knew or suspected him to be guilty of, in a dress of *horror*, lest his *conviction* should *languish*, and he *relapse* into a dangerous *security*. But when I perceived that it increased to a great *degree*, and was attended with vehement longing after Christ, and a willingness to forsake all for him, I altered the former *method*.

I think I had sufficient evidence of the *depth* of his *humiliation* and *strength* of his *desire* after Christ, in the following *instances*, and many others that might be mentioned, did I not design brevity. He profess'd, with an agony of *passion*, " that he was
" willing to bear the torments of hell, if so he
" might but get a sight of Christ, and *interest* in
" him. " He earnestly and frequently begg'd of God, " that he would humble him to the *dust*,
" yea, below the *dust*. "

One morning about the break of day, after great wrestling through the night and day preceeding, he took occasion from the time of day to speak as surprisingly, as ever I heard any mortal, about the *morning-star*; longing and praying, " that the
" blessed *Jesus*, the true, the bright, the beautiful *morning-star*, who had introduced the *light*
" and the *day* into a *dark world*, would appear in
" mercy to his poor distressed soul. " And thus he improved the time about the *sun's* rising, begging,
" that

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v

“ that the *sun* of righteousness would shine upon
“ his disconsolate, dejected, wretched soul with
“ *beams* of mercy and salvation.” And thus he
improved many other *occurrences*, every of which
were they here mentioned, would swell this paper
to too large a *bulk*. But to be brief, his heart
seemed to be sick, sore sick, with panting after
Christ, ready to burst in pieces. I have, (glory to
God) through the riches of free grace, been honor-
ed with the sight of many a convinced sinner, but
never did I behold, besides himself, any in such a
rack of acute and continued anguish, under the dis-
mal apprehensions of a holy, just, jealous, and pro-
voked *deity*, impending *ruin* and endless *misery*.

Now when I perceived such plain *signs* of a deep
conviction, great *humiliation*, and earnest *desire*, I
altered the former method, as I hinted before, and
offered all the encouraging supports I could gather
from every promissory part of the sacred *scriptures*,
that I thought related to his case, that I might mi-
nister comfort to his sick soul, but in *vain*. Some-
times after having offered a promissory *scripture*,
and laboured to persuade him that he had an inter-
est in it, because the conditions on which the pro-
mised blessings were suspended, were wrought in
him; this would sometimes have so much influence
upon him, that it would prevent his crying out for
a few minutes, (just like a man drowning in trou-
bled waters, a small *twig* may support for a few mo-
ments, but the next *surge* that comes will beat him
off) and then immediately the *torrent* of his grief
would break forth in the most doleful *accents*; com-
plaining, “ that neither that, nor any other pro-
“ mise in the whole *book* of God belonged to him;
“ that the conditions annexed to them were not
“ wrought in him.” The truth is, his wound
was so deep, that none but God’s own arm could

heal it. But it pleased the Almighty, after four days and four nights enduring the utmost agony of soul *distress*, in which space he cried out almost every moment, after the manner before described, to make his *consolations* as conspicuous and eminent as his *convictions* had been. But by the way, *observe reader*, that for some time before it pleased the Almighty to shed abroad the *beams* of mercy and love into his soul, he was much exercised with sorrowful and piercing reflexions upon his conceived hypocrisy : he judged and condemned himself to be a pharisee, a hypocrite, for crying out as he had done ; and yet the biting of his conscience, the sharpness of his inward pain, and weight of his grief was such, that he could not prevent it, therefore he would have all people out of the room, that he might pray and mourn alone.

One morning when I went in to see him, I perceived a great alteration in his countenance : he that about an hour before looked like a condemned man, going to be put to some cruel death, looked upon me with a chearful gladsome *countenance*, (so as if a person oppressed with poverty had the most valuable *diadems* and opulent *kingdoms* the earth affords or contains, conferred upon him, would look) and spoke to me in these words : “ O brother, “ the Lord Jesus has come in mercy to my soul : “ I was begging for a *crumb* of mercy, with the “ dogs, and Christ has told me he would give me a “ *crumb*. ” Then he desired me to thank God by prayer, which I did more than once. He also requested me to praise God by singing part of a *psalm*, which I comply'd with, and sung the *thirty fourth*. And was it not strange and surprising, *reader*, to hear this *person*, of whom I have been treating, singing the praises of God with more joy, energy and clearness, than any of the *spectators*, who crowded in upon

pon so extraordinary and solemn an *occasion*, especially considering the time when this happened, *viz.* between ten and eleven of the clock in the forenoon, and that about three of the clock the same morning he was *speechless* for some minutes, and in the judgment of all the *spectators*, *expiring* in the pangs of death. Yea, the consolations of God had such a mighty influence upon him, that about an hour or two after, he went thirty two roods upon his own *feet*, with but a very little help, to see his *brother*, the reverend Mr. *William Tennent*, who was then extremely sick, nigh unto death, deem'd by the most past all human probability of recovery: for he said, " he must see his *brother*, in order to " tell him what God had done for his soul; that " he might praise God upon his account, before " he died. " And indeed when he came to the upper room, where his brother lay, (who is yet through mercy alive, and who has been, and is like to be further serviceable to advance the *kingdom of Jesus* in the hearts of sinners) I having him by one hand and Mr. *Court Van Varbes* by the other, he had almost sprung out of our hands when he came near the head of the stairs, the *joy of God* became so his *strength* and *song*. When he came to his *brother*, he address'd himself in these words, " O *brother*! the Lord has looked in pity upon my soul: " let the *heavens*, *earth* and *sea*, and all that in " them is, *praise God*. " ----- But being exposed too soon to the cold air, he fell into a fever, and then in some few hours *questioned* that eminent discovery of *God's love*; but was in a little time after comforted, and thenceforward the course of his conversation was altered. He had many after-*sealings* of God's covenant-love, but in the *intervals* was frequently dejected, and distressed with doubtful thoughts about his *state*. Don't expect, reader, that

that I should relate what affecting *impressions* these extraordinary *occurrences* had upon the *hearers* and *spectators* : only one particular I must not conceal with a *vail* of silence, *viz.* that a certain person of distinction, who in respect of practical religion, was but *Galeo*-like, being present when my reverend brother received these *consolations* mention'd, was forced to confess, “ that the sight of these things “ was enough to convince an atheist of the reality “ of religion. ”

But to proceed, after these satisfactory discoveries of the love of God in Jesus, he became a conscientious performer of the duties of religion, both negative, positive and relative. He was cautious in avoiding all incentives to vice, as being sensible of his own weakness, and the force of temptations.

He was painful in the performance of such duties especially as were most contrary to nature's ease, such as constant secret devotion, and frequent fasting ; the last of which is almost wholly neglected by the greatest part of the present generation, both young and old, which is for a lamentation !

He was a tender-hearted, kind and courteous relative ; of a very sympathetic spirit, and particularly his dutiful respects to his *reverend* and aged *father*, his honored and affectionate *mother*, (of whose early kindnesses he still retained a grateful sense) merits honourable *mention* and chearful *imitation*. His great soul disdained any thing that was mean and trivial, and inclined him to the most noble and generous actions that were within the *verge* of his power. But not to insist here,

I proceed to consider his attainments in the christian graces or virtues. Now there are these three, *viz.* *humility*, *love to Christ*, and *zeal for his kingdom*, in which it pleased God to give him considerable *advances*, each of which I shall speak a little of. And,

I. He

I. He was wont to express himself in the most abasing *strains*, viz. “ that he thought himself one “ of the worst of *creatures* ever the *creation* bore. ” Give me leave to mention but a few instances of his *humility* and *modesty*.

Was not this a remarkable evidence of the abasing *sense* he had of his own *unworthiness*, that he earnestly, upon his dying bed, *desired his relations*, “ to *forbear* any *funeral-encomiums* upon him “ when he was gone ; for, he *asserted* with some “ degree of *passion*, that he *deserved* none. ” But this was an instance of his *modesty* and *humility*, yet we cannot but think, that we should obey God rather than *man*, by labouring to convey the *memoirs* of God’s peculiar *goodness*, expressed to his *servant*, to the latest *posterity*.

Another *instance* was this : when he was admitted to the ministerial *office*, in his private studies he often took the *bible* in his hand, and walked up and down the room *weeping* and *mourning* over it ; because, altho’ there was such a *treasury* of precious *truths* contained in that blessed *book*, that he understood so little (as he thought) of them. A *sense* of the *greatness* of the ministerial *work*, and of his own *ignorance* and *unfitness* for it, (as he conceived) was often a very oppressive *burden* to his *spirits*.

Again, It was long, even after it pleased God to succeed his *labours*, before he could be persuaded to *believe* that the *sovereign Majesty* of heaven would bless the *endeavours* of a *person* every way so *mean* and *unworthy* as he reckoned himself to be : and therefore when *reports* were brought to him of persons *convinced* by his *sermons*, he could not think for a time that they were *real* and *special*, until further *matter* of *conviction* was offered him, by a *variety* of bright and uncontestable *evidences*.

As to his *love* to the *Lord Jesus*, 'tis necessary I should offer one word. It may be asserted with *truth* and *justice*, that he had an *affectionate affection* to the *king of saints*, which he express'd to the *surprize* and *satisfaction* of such devout souls, who had the *advantage* of hearing his *eloquent* and *earnest prayers*. *Christ* and him *crucified* was the *mark* of his *pursuits*, the *sacred centre* to which the various *lines* of his *life* run, with a *delightful proneness*, and in which they *terminated*. *Christ* was the *object* both of his *supreme love*, and *highest admiration*; of him he would often speak in the *rhetorical* and *rapturous strains* of *love-language*; upon this most excellent, precious and delightful *subject*, his *tongue* was sometimes as the *pen* of a ready *writer*.

He had also a very flaming *zeal* for the promotion and establishment of the *Messiah's kingdom*: it was often, often, his *petition* to God; a *request* which he usually offered with much *vehemence*, namely, "that it would please the *gracious God* to
 " make him *serviceable* to his *church* in the *world*;
 " and that he wou'd not suffer him to live only to
 " devour the *alms* of it, but rather remove him to
 " himself, before he became *useless* and *unprofitable*." Which request the *Almighty* granted: for he was carried off in a throng of *labour* and *successes*, when his *heart* was much set upon the work of God, and his people's *love* upon him.

If we consider him in his public *character*: it pleas'd that *God*, in whose hands the hearts of all men are, and *who can turn them*, as he does the *streams of water* in the *south*, to stir up in him *earnest longings* after the *service* of God and his *church* in the *ministerial office*; a *station* which the *fountain* of gifts and *Father of spirits* had in a peculiar manner *qualified* him for; a *station* in which he
 thought

thought he might more eminently *dedicate* and *devote* all his *parts* and *powers* to the *glorious God*, in labouring to illustrate his *honour*, and advance his people's *interest*. With these *desires* and *designs*, after having past the usual *trials* with uncommon *approbation*, he came into the *ministry*: in which he laboured as a *workman that needed not to be ashamed*.

His *ministerial administrations* were attended with three notable *qualities*, viz. *prudence*, *pains*, and *success*.

He *behav'd* himself in all respects, with such decent *caution*, but yet attended with such christian *plainness* and manly *boldness*, that those of his people who lov'd him not (tho' indeed there were but few such) fear'd him.

As to his *pains* in the *ministerial work*, the *truth* is, his *labour* was *great*, tho' his *time* was *short*; his *race* was *swift* and *vehement*. His heart was so fix'd upon the work of God, that there was no persuading him to desist in the *progreſs* of his public *labours*, even then when his *body* was much *emaciated* and weakned by a *consumptive illness*, when it was judg'd by skilful *physicians* very *prejudicial* to his *broken* and *languishing constitution*. He often *preach'd* to his dear *people*, while he was under the *power* and *influence* of a burning *fever*: which plainly shew'd the *flame* and *fervor* of his *zeal*, and that he had but little regard to his *body*, compar'd with the precious *souls* of men, for whom he was willing to *spend* and be *spent*.

In his public *discourses*, not to mention the *justness* of his *method*, *beauty* of *style*, and *fluency* of *expression*, by which he *chain'd* his not unwilling *hearers* to his *lips*; he was very *awakening* and *terrible* (to unbelievers) in denouncing and describing, with the most *vehement pathos* and awful *solemnity*, the

ter-

terrors of an offended deity, the threats of a broken law, the miseries of a sinful state : and this subject, in the course of his ministry, he insisted much upon, because he found it by experience, (with many others) the most effectual and successful mean to alarm secure sinners. And observe, reader, he us'd a close, distinguishing and detecting method in the application of his sermons, which with his pungent mode of expression, was very piercing and solemn : but as Dr. Watts observes in his funeral elegy upon Mr. Gouge, so I may truly say of him, " that he knew " the pity of Emmanuel's heart as well as the terrors " of Jehovah's hand. " He was as tender and compassionate in his addresses to gracious souls, as he was awful and awakening to others ; he knew as well how to open and apply the gospel balsam to sick souls, as to brandish and apply the law's lancet to the secure ; and he was as willing to do the one, as the other. But indeed he was very cautious of misapplying the different portions of the word to his hearers, or of setting before them only a common mess, (as the manner of some is) and leaving it to them to divide it among themselves, as their fancy and humour directed them : for he knew well that that was the bane of preaching.

Once more, He was a very successful minister. When he was under trials in order to the ministry, he was much exercis'd with doubts, difficulties and distresses, about his call to that great and awful trust : but it pleased the good God to dissipate these clouds, and afford to his perplexed anxious mind, abundant satisfaction respecting this matter, by the numerous seals which crown'd his public labours : (for, as famous Rutherford observes, " it is not probable that God will seal a blank. ") So that it may be truly said of him, that he gained more poor sinners to Christ in that little compass of time which

which he had to improve in the ministerial *work*, which was but about three years and an half, than many in the space of twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years. Many souls have, and will have, reason to bless God to eternity, that ever they saw him. But tho' he was thus honour'd with the *smiles* of heaven upon his *labours*, with the kind *regards* of a loving and generous people, who, *had it been possible, could have pluck'd out their eyes and given them to him*, Gal. iv. 15. a people, who shew'd as much respectful *regard* and *sympathy* as ever any before them did to a *minister*; yet was he far from being exalted in his own mind, but through grace still retained a just, grateful, and humble sense of God's distinguishing *goodness*, and his own *unworthiness*.

But I must hasten to consider the melancholy concluding period of this laborious and successful *scene* of action.

As he drew nearer to his end, his *love* to, and *concern* for, his *people* encreas'd: he would often express himself to his *brother*, with many *tears*, in these words, "I am griev'd for my poor *people*;" "for I fear they will be left to *wander*, as *sheep*" "without a *shepherd*, or get one that will pull down what I have poorly endeavoured to build up." Yea, his brother (who lay by him) has frequently overheard him, in the deep *silence* of the night, *wrestling* with God by *prayer*, with *sobs* and tears, (as he understood) for his *people*, even then when so reduc'd by the consumption, that he could scarce walk alone; the wasting pains of which lingering and tedious distemper he bore with *unbroken patience* and *silent submission* to his father's pleasure, until it pleased God to open a *door* of escape to his captive soul, through the *ruins* of his decay'd frame.

On *Saturday* evening, the last evening of his life, he was seiz'd with a violent *pang* of death, which
was

was thought by the standers-by to be his last : of which unexpectedly reviving, and observing a *disorder* among them, he address'd one of them thus, whom he saw uncommonly affected, with a chearful countenance : " I would not have you think " the worse of the ways of holiness, because you " see me in such agonies of distress ; for I know " there is a crown of glory in heaven for me, which " I shall shortly wear. " Afterwards many times in the night he earnestly prayed in these words, " Come *Lord Jesus*, Come *Lord Jesus* ! O *Jesus* ! " why dost thou linger ? " Sometime before day, after a little pause, he express'd, with a humble confidence, the last words of the sweet psalmist of *Israel*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. " *Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure : for this is all my salvation and all my desire.* " About the break of day, he call'd his brother *William* to prayer, and earnestly desir'd him to implore *heaven* for his speedy removal : for he said " he " long'd to be gone. " About eight or nine of the clock, on the morning of the *Sabbath*, (the season which he us'd to improve in the most earnest and winged supplications to the *divine Majesty*, for his blessing upon the *church* in general, and particularly for that *branch* of it he presided over) it pleased his *master* to translate him to that great *assembly* of the *just*, the *church* of the *first-born*, there to celebrate an eternal *sabbatism*, in *praises* and *songs* of *triumph*, instead of his former *painful employments*. A few minutes before he *expir'd*, he broke out into the following rapturous expression, (having his brother *William* by the hand) " Farewel my brethren, " farewel father and mother, farewel world, with all " thy vain delights : welcome God and father, welcome sweet *Lord Jesus* : welcome death, welcome " eternity.

" *eternity. Amen.* " A little after, he only mentioned with a low voice (the strength of nature being broken) these words, " Come *Lord Jesus*, " come *Lord Jesus!* " and so he fell asleep in *Christ*, and obtain'd an abundant *entrance* into the everlasting *kingdom* of his *God* and *saviour*, and has left us to *mourn* the *loss* the *church* of *Christ* has sustain'd in general, by the dismal *gloom* of an angry *heaven*, in the removal of so prevailing an *intercessor*, and faithful *watchman*, who could well sound an alarm ; and his own *congregation* and *relations* in particular, by the absence of such a painful *pastor*, and passionate *friend*. What a doleful *presage* is it to a land, of impending, approaching *calamities*, when the *great God* locks up such *jewels* in his *cabinet!* *Isai. lvii. 1.*

He has left us to *mourn* our own, and the public *loss*, by the removal of such a *guide* from us, and *guard* from others, in the passionate language of *Elisha* over a departed *Elijah*, 2 Kings ix. 12. *And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof: and he took hold of his clothes, and rent them in two pieces.*

He is gone to the *rest* of *God*, and left us behind him in this *doleful-desart*, to *travel* and *mourn*, and *hang our harps on willows*, while he drinks the *joys* of *angels*, in that *seat* of perfect pleasure, where all *tears* are wip'd away. For,

*Jam procul a patria mœsti Babylonis ad oras,
Fluminis ad liquidas mœsti sedemus aquas.*

*By Babel's borders sorrowful we sit ;
Far from the country where we love, we wait.*

He has left us to *mourn*, but, blessed be *God*, not without *hope*, a rational and scriptural *hope*, of meet-
ing

ing in a better country, where there will be no need of parting any more, and where the happy inhabitants are perfectly freed from sorrow, strife and sin. A country of which a poor Indian could say,

*Illic vera quies, illic sine fine voluptas ;
Gaudia & humanis non referenda sonis.*

*There joy unbounded infinitely glides ;
There's rest and pleasure blooming too, besides.*

Thus did this faithful servant of God live, and thus did he die.

Sic mihi contingat vivere, sicque mori.

*Thus let me live, thus let me die, O God !
Thus let me triumph on the shining road !*

It may be with justice observ'd concerning him, that he liv'd much desir'd, and died much lamented. His funeral *hearse* was well invironed by thronging crouds, and well bedew'd with ornamental tributary tears.

The reverend and ingenious Mr. Dickinson of *Elisabeth-Town*, compos'd the following elegy to be inscrib'd on his tomb-stone, which is indeed a just and genuine description of his character.

*Here lies what was mortal of the reverend Mr.
JOHN FENNENT; nat. Nov. 12th 1707.
Obiit April 23. 1732.*

*Who quick grew old in learning, virtue, grace ;
Quick finish'd well, yielded to death's embrace :
Whose moulder'd dust this cabinet contains ;
Whose soul triumphant with bright seraphs reigns.*

Wait-

The PREFACE. xvii

*Waiting the time till heaven's bright conclave flame,
And the last trump repair his ruin'd frame.*

*Cur prematuram mortem queramur acerbam :
Mors matura venit, cum bona vita fuit.*

But I proceed to speak something of the following *sermons* : and this I must crave leave to say, that tho' they are bereav'd of the *author's* finishing *hand*, which doubtless would have help'd them to appear with more *beauty* and *lustre* ; yet as they are, I can't but hope that they will be *grateful* to all devout and intelligent persons, and accepted of as *specimens* of their *author's* *ingenuity* and *piety*.

The *subjects* treated of in them are *weighty* and *momentous* : the first treats of *regeneration*, which is the *foundation* of *practical religion* ; the *soul* that animates it, without which it is but a dead *carcase* ; the *source* from which it *springs*. Secondly, in this *sermon* you have the *nature* of this *change* plainly and succinctly *open'd* ; it's absolute *necessity* in order to *salvation* uncontestably *demonstrated*, and it's inseparable *characters* agreeably and justly *display'd*. In the second, you have the *nature* of *adoption*, the necessary *consequent* of *regeneration*, with it's *speculiar* and noble *privileges*, solidly, tho' briefly, *discuss'd*.

I made choice of these *sermons*, not because I deem'd them the best of his *composition*, but because best suited to the subject before treated of.

I beseech the reader, that he would read them with *attention* and *reflexion*, and ask the divine direction and benediction upon his *pains* : for this is the way in which only he has rational encouragement of meeting with saving good and edification.

Courteous reader, I have added an *expostulatory address* to, and *lamentation* over *unconverted sinners*, with some *directions* to those that are truly *gracious*,

cious, by way of *appendix* to the *first* of these *sermons* of my *brother's*, partly because the *discourse* concluded abruptly, and principally because I wanted to express a little of the *thoughts*, *sorrows* and *desires* of my *soul*, upon that so necessary and precious a *subject*; that I might essay to *allure* the sinner's *love*, as I had attempted in the first discourse to *strike* their *fear*; that so by any means, if it were the good pleasure of God, I might be an instrument in his hand of gaining some to *Christ*. I cannot say I have come up to the *dignity* and *weight* of the *subject*, but I can say, I have desired and attempted it. Pray, reader, be entreated to *weigh* the arguments in thy mind impartially, and then *judge* if they are not *rational*: and I beseech thee to remember, *for Christ's sake*, that in this *world* only (which is a state of probation) there is time to work out your salvation in; the damned in *hell* are for ever past it; the blessed in *heaven* are in the perfect enjoyment of it; therefore *call upon God while he is near, seek him while he may be found*, *Isai. lv. 6.* Let not unconverted sinners encourage themselves in sin, because God delays the execution of his justice; for the longer abused patience waits, the more enflamed and terrible will be the execution of provoked anger at last, when men have filled up the measure of their impieties, and thereby ripened themselves for the *strokes* of it, *Gen. xv. 16. Jer. li. 13. Isai. xlii. 14.* *I have a long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travelling woman, I will destroy and devour at once.*

And let not the faint think his work is over, because he is converted: this is just as if the *Israelites*, when they had passed through the *Red-sea*, had imagined themselves to be got into *Canaan*; but they afterwards found an *howling wilderness* to travel through, full of *dangers*, *difficulties* and *enemies*,

mies, which they must grapple with, before they get to *Canaan*, and so will you. When the ship is built, and rigg'd, and launched, and loaded, and beginning to move to her port, the voyage is but just begun: the mariners must expect to meet with storms and hard labour before they get to their intended harbour. Thus it is with you, my dear brethren: *conversion* but leads you into that narrow way, in which you must expect *travel* and *labour*, and difficulties of different kinds; but in the mean time I must confess, that conversion gives you an habitual fitness to *perform* the one and *sustain* the other. Beware of being ensnared by the *amusements* of this *vain world*: remember you will pay dear for all *stolen sweets*. Beware of forgetting your *first love*. Beware of a covetous, slothful, or ambitious spirit, each of which will prove very prejudicial to your progress, if indulged. Live within sight of your own *country*. O! bring forth fruits for *Christ*: for what do you stand in the *vineyard*, but for this? what is the design of all the *waterings* of the *word*, and *prunings* of *providence*, but to make you *fruitful*? Read *Isai. v.* Remember the *dignity* to which you are advanced, and act worthy of it: you are the *sons* of a *king*, disdain and avoid *base sneaking actions*, as unsuitable to your *exalted character*. *Hasten, hasten, hasten*, upon the *wings* of *faith*, and *feet* of *love*, to your *rest*. *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *I commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified*, Acts xx. 32. 1 Pet. v. 10. and remain,

New-Brunswick,
July 19. 1734.

Yours in the dear Lord *Jesus*.
GILBERT TENNENT.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

IF any ungodly men, with effronted impudence, will deride the foregoing broken *memoirs* I have given of my brother's *conversion* and *character*, it being natural for the *sons of pride* to laugh at that which through their *blindness* and *blockish ignorance* they *can't*, or through their *malice* and *prejudice* against *God* and *religion*, they *won't* understand : remember that by your *scoffs*, you *make your own bonds and fetters strong*, *Isai. xxviii. 22.* You cannot by your virulence hurt the *venerable dead* : he is got beyond the *reach* of your *rage* ; and as for myself, I look upon your groundless and envenom'd *calumnies* among my greatest *honours* : but if ye desire a further answer, take it in the words of Dr. WATTS, in one of his *lyric poems* :

“ *Laugh, ye prophane, and swell, and burst,*
“ *with bold impiety :*
“ *Yet ye shall live for ever curst,*
“ *and wish in vain to die.*

Farewel,



G. T.

Regene-

Regeneration opened.

John iii. 3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*



THESE words are part of a remarkable dialogue between Christ and *Nicodemus*; in which *Nicodemus* his fear, ignorance, and willingness to be taught, are principally bewrayed. He was one of the Pharisees, as we are informed from the first *verse* of this *chapter*, who in general were stated enemies against Christ and his gospel; these Pharisees were proud separatists, who upon the opinion of their own righteousness despised all others.

As to his station, he was a ruler, as the word *ῥαββί* signifies. This man being in a high and eminent station, through fear of incurring the anger or displeasure of the *Jewish sanhedrim*, by openly professing Christ, came to him by night, *v. 2*. Thus we see what clogs, hindrances, and impediments, honour, grandeur, and greatness are in the way of the profession and practice of truth and holiness. Yet it is evident from the words of *Nicodemus* in the second *verse*, notwithstanding his fears
to

to acknowledge openly the truth of Christ's mission from the Father, that he had a well-grounded persuasion of it, from the miracles the blessed Jesus had wrought : *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do those miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* But certainly it is of vast consequence and importance, that the gross ignorance and strange stupidity of this learned man, a teacher in *Israel*, concerning the vital part of piety, ----- are so perspicuously detected in our text and context : *Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily-----* In the words are three things remarkable, 1. A Proposition. 2. An Affirmation. 3. The implicit occasion of them both.

1. The proposition, in these words, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* In it there be two things, (1.) The subject, *a man.* (2.) The predicate, or that which is spoken concerning the subject, *be born again.*

(1.) As to the subject, *a man.* This indefinite expression (the matter so requiring as the present case is) is equipollent, or equivalent, to an universal. It is as much as if he had said, *every man*, of whatsoever order, or character, or age, or nation, great or small, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, learned or unlearned, young or old, jew or gentile, bond or free, male or female, must be born again, or they cannot see the kingdom of God, *Gal. vi. 15. Heb. xii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 23. 2 John 1, 13. John iii. 7. 1 John ii. 29. ----- iii. 9. ----- v. 4.*

(2.) The predicate ; which being complex treats of two things, viz. [1.] Of happiness, under that term, *the kingdom of God.* [2.] The qualification universally necessary to obtain it, which is, *being born again*, *ἐκ νεότητος γεννηθῆναι ἀνωθεν.* The Greek word *ἀνωθεν* is generally rendred *superne*, *from above* ; but the tenor of our context, especially

pecially *Nicodemus* his answer to Christ, *how can a man enter the second time-----?* v. 4. sufficiently proves that it signifies as much here as *διωπειν* or again. *ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, he cannot see the kingdom of God: by seeing here I understand possessing, according to that phrase of the Romans, *hæreditatem cernere*. A proof of this we have in our Lord's sermon on the mount, *Matth.* v. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*, i. e. they shall see him to their comfort; see him so as to enjoy him; see him as a friend and father; and possess him as a satisfying portion. *Cannot*: an unregenerate man is under a threefold impotency, in regard of the enjoyment of God's kingdom.

(1. Natural: he must take this kingdom by main force, out of the hands of a just and infinite God, if he gets it at all, while he remains in this state. Now what power has a guilty worm to do this, *whose foundation is in the dust, and who is crushed before the moth?* Job iv. 19.

(2. Moral: he is a subject utterly unqualified for the pure pleasures that kingdom affords, being universally corrupt, and subject to the government of sin and sense.

(3. Judicial: he is disseiz'd of, and separated from this inheritance, by the sentence of Christ the judge of quick and dead; which no power in heaven or earth can reverse: for *he that liveth and was dead carries the keys of hell and death* at his girdle, Rev. i. 18.

An unregenerate person, as such, neither can, nor shall, see the kingdom of heaven, so as to inherit it, if there be power enough in God and Christ to keep him out; for this Christ gives his word in pawn, which he will surely accomplish. Now there is a threefold kingdom made mention of in the holy scriptures.

I.) A kingdom of God's providence, establish'd upon

upon the basis of God's uncontrollable power, and unsearchable wisdom, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 11. *Jacob's* God has the reins of government on his shoulders ; he wields the eternal scepter, and sits at the sacred helm.

2.) The kingdom of God's *grace* in the church, built upon *Christ* the golden *foundation*, the *chief corner-stone*. This *kingdom* is given to the *Branch* by God the Father, as the inspired evangelist testifies, *Luke* i. 32.

3.) A kingdom of *glory* and blessedness : *Matth.* xxv. 34. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you-----* This last mentioned I take to be the *kingdom* designed by *Jesus* in the text, viz. that *triumphant quire* in which the *saints* and *angels* sing *eternal hallelujahs* to the *everlasting King*. *Heaven* is call'd a *kingdom*, because in it God rules his sons and subjects. *God's kingdom* is where he reigns : now he reigns in righteousness, *Heb.* i. 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.*

2. The asseveration, *Verily, verily*. This *asseveration* is a conspicuous *confirmation* of the truth of the *proposition*, tending clearly to manifest the great momentousness and importance of it. There be two things in the *asseveration*, which serve to establish inviolably the veracity or *truth* of the *proposition*, viz. (1.) The *repetition* of the particle *Amen*. (2.) The *dignity* of the speaker.

The word *Amen*, rendred *verily* in the text, is twofold, either *prefixed* or *affixed* : when it is *prefixed*, or put before a proposition, it is the note of a *certain* and earnest affirmation, as in the words of our text, *Verily, verily*. When it is *affixed*, or subsequent to a proposition, it notes two things : either, [1.] The assent of the mind, will, affections ; as at the conclusion of the *Creed* and the *Lord's prayer*. Or,

[2.] An

[2.] An asseveration, or certain affirmation, as the word *Amen* at the end of the *Lord's prayer*, signifies not only our assent to, but assurance of the reality and certainty of the things therein contained. Now the repetition of this particle in our text, like the redoubling of *Pharaoh's dream*, *Gen. xli. 32.* shews us at once the undeniable certainty and great weight of the thing spoken of.

(2.) The dignity of the *speaker* : who is it that speaks thus ? The *blessed and holy Jesus*, as our text informs us ; which name some derive from *mitto*, a word that signifies *to send*, because the *Lord Jesus* is the bright *angel*, the faithful *messenger* of the everlasting *covenant*, *Mal. iii. 1.* *Heb. iii. 2.* others from *sano*, a word that signifies *to heal*, because our *Lord Jesus* was the true *physician*, *Matth. ix. 12.* *Mark ii. 17.* *Basil* and *Cyril* among the *antients* are of this opinion.

But the angel explains the true derivation of it, *Matth. i. 21.* *And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins* ; and that not only typically, as *Moses* and *Joshua* and others, but really and truly. Nor, [2.] only temporally, as those before mentioned, just from bodily miseries, but from spiritual and eternal, from sin and death, *Heb. ii. 14.* *1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.* *1 John iii. 8.* [3.] Neither did he only free his people from misery, as *Moses* did *Israel* out of *Egypt* ; no, but as his type *Joshua* led *Israel* into *Canaan*, so does the blessed *Jesus* the anti-type introduce his people into a state of endless, uninterrupted, and unspeakably ravishing delight, in the imperial *paradise*, of which the earthly *Canaan* was but a dark figure.

Now I say, the *dignity* of the person speaking in our text, gives great weight and confirmation to the truth spoken. Will he who is *truth* it self lie ? will he who is the great *prophet* of his people, co-

equal and co-eternal with his Father, the *brightness of his glory, the express image of his person*, Heb. xiii. 4, 8. deceive us? *I say unto you: I who am the alpha and omega, the first and the last; the King of kings and Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth.*

As to the third particular, the *ground or occasion* of the words of our text, implied in that phrase, *Jesus answered*. It is difficult to find out what were the words *Nicodemus* spake, to which *Jesus* gave answer; there is a diversity of opinions about it. Some think that *Christ's* words are a direct answer to those words of *Nicodemus* mentioned in the second verse: as if *Christ* had said, Thou lookest upon me as a prophet only, thou can'st do no otherwise, unless thou wert regenerated. Others think, and that more probably, that from the good opinion *Nicodemus* had of *Christ*, he asked the way to salvation; and that our text is an answer to that question.

From the words thus briefly explained, there arise these two *doctrinal observations*, the one implied, and the other expressed.

- I. *That man from his very birth is depraved.*
- II. *That regeneration is absolutely necessary in order to obtain eternal salvation.*

As to the I. of these which is this, *That man from his very birth is depraved.*

The method I design to follow in prosecuting this doctrine is,

- First, To prove the truth of it.*
- Secondly, Explain the nature of it.*
- Thirdly, To improve it. And,*

First, I am to consider the *truth* of the doctrine. This is plain from the text, for if the first birth

was

was not vitiated, what need would there be of a second? The royal prophet *Isaiah* upbraids *Israel* with this, *And was called a transgressor from the womb*, *Isai. xlviii. 8.* The psalmist gives testimony to the same truth, *Psal. li. 5. I was shapen in sin*, not only corrupted with sin as soon as born, but before, even in our formation. *Job* confirms this in the 14th. chap. of his book, 4. ver. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* Yea, the blessed *Jesus* makes this the ground of the necessity of a change, in the 7. ver. of our context, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*: as if Christ should say, You need not wonder, *Nicodemus*, at my inculcation of the necessity of this inward change or new birth; because men are corrupted from their first birth. This original depravity is conveyed to all the sons of *Adam* by generation, unless prevented by a miracle, as in Christ. The sickness and death of infants are a plain and unanswerable proof of this; *For the wages of sin is death*, *Rom. vi. 23.* Also the baptismal laver shews this hereditary contagion and infection. But,

Secondly, I am to explain the nature of this depravity, which consists chiefly in these three things, viz.

1. In a privation of good.
2. In an antipathy to God.
3. In a propensity to evil.

1. Then, In every unregenerate soul there is a privation of all good: there is no spark or signature of that pristine beautiful image, engraven at first on the soul by God; no reliques of man's primitive righteousness, neither in habit or act, in inclination or motion, that is spiritually good, *Rom. vii. 18.* In my flesh, i. e. in my nature, considered as corrupted, there dwells no good thing. The soul is depriv'd of it's antient ornaments and furniture; it is left poor, without spiritual riches, blind, without saving

knowledge, *naked* without spiritual raiment, *Rev.* iii. 17. And,

2. There is *antipathy to God*, his ways, his people, his image, *Rom.* viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity to God.* This is evident from the speech and practice of wicked people, their imbittered jeers, and satyrical invectives against God's people. A *Cain* hated an *Abel*, and an *Ishmael* an *Isaac*, and an *Esau* a *Jacob*; and that because of their goodness, *1 John* iii. 12. Now this hellish spite is to be found in all natural unregenerate people, till remov'd by the supernatural change; of which I design to speak afterwards. I now proceed to the

3. Particular contained in this *depravity*, which is the *propensity* that is in all unconverted people to every evil, *Prov.* xxii. 15. *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.* Indeed there is not an equal propensity in all, to every sin: no, for some by reason of their natural temperament, manner of education, or custom, are inclined to one sin more than some others; yet all men by nature are virtually disposed to every sin, for we are prone to evil as the sparks fly upward, *Job* v. 7. Every sin is form'd in our nature; they want only time, opportunity, temptation, and the removal of restraining grace, to bring them forth into action.

USE. Hence we are informed, 1. Of man's miserable and deplorable state by nature, which affords us sufficient matter for the deepest *humiliation*, and most doleful *lamentation*! 'Tis on this account that we are rendred obnoxious to the vindictive justice of a terrible and holy God, *Eph.* ii. 3. this is it that makes our lives so corrupted, and all our religious services so defective and depraved.

2. This informs us of the absolute necessity of an universal change, of heart as well as practice, in order to obtain fellowship and communion with a holy

ly sin-hating God here, 1 *John* i. 6. or the more full enjoyment of him in the life to come. How can there be a sweet communion, and full enjoyment, without *love*? and how can there be *love* without *likeness*? and pray what *likeness* or resemblance is there between an infinitely *pure God*, and an unconverted sinner, who is a very mass of pollution and defilement? How can that *God* who is glorious in holiness, fix his complacential love upon that which is the object of his eternal abhorrence? And how can an unrenewed sinner, who is fill'd with enmity against God, *Rom.* viii. 7. fix his highest love upon one he hates with an implacable hatred? All which consider'd complexly, shews us the absolute necessity of an universal change. Which naturally leads me to the II. *observation*, which is,

That regeneration is absolutely necessary in order to obtain eternal salvation.

This is evident from the words of our text, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Also from *Gal.* vi. 15. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails any thing, but the new creature.* Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature, old things are pass'd away, and all things are become new. *Heb.* xii. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* *Rev.* xxi. 27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the lamb's book of life.*

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall endeavour to observe the following method :

First, Shew *negatively* what regeneration is not.

Secondly, *Positively* shew what it is.

Thirdly, Propose those *reasons* that urge the necessity of it.

Fourthly, Improve it.

As to the *first* propos'd, which was to shew what *regeneration* is not. And,

1. It is not what *Nicodemus* grossly conceived, a *re-entry* into the *womb* of our *mother*. It is surprising that a man of so polite *literature*, as we have reason to believe *Nicodemus* was; a *master*, a *teacher* in *Israel*, acquainted with the law and *word of God*, where doubtless he had frequently read such passages as those, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* should have such gross conceptions of this work of *God*: but hereby are these sayings of *God* verified, *1 Cor. i. 21.* ----- *ii. 14.* *For in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God; but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Such is the inherent hereditary contagion of our apostatiz'd nature, that were we born a thousand times in a natural way, it would not remedy that *malady*. This the *blessed* and *holy Jesus* plainly and clearly confirms in the sixth verse of our context, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, i. e. it is corrupted and contaminated.

Hence it appears to be a *prodigy* of incomparable folly, for any to boast of, and glory in the grandeur of their descent and lineage, seeing that whatsoever *is born of the flesh is flesh*, and without outward cultivation and inward renovation, must be the subjects of indelible misery. Neither,

2. Is *regeneration* a change of the *essence* or being of the soul: *hæc semper eadem physicæ manent.* The soul is not made new as to it's being or substance, *aut quoad esse physicum*; otherwise a new soul must be infus'd, which we read not of; but as to it's qualities, *aut quoad esse morale*: new qualities or principles of action are infus'd into the soul by *God*, by which it is inclin'd and sway'd after another man.

manner, and to another scope than formerly. Some do talk strangely of this affair, that the substance of the *soul* is chang'd, as *Flaccus Fliricus*, *Gregory Nazianzene*, and others; that "people are Goded into God, and Christed into Christ," as their expressions *θεοποιεῖν*, *χριστοποιεῖν*, import. 'Tis true, the scripture calls this gracious *change* a participation of the *divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. but this is only to shew, (1.) The *reality* and fixedness of this work of grace, that it is no notion or fancy, but a solid reality. (2.) The *resemblance* it bears to the *divine perfections*. Such persons are renew'd after God's *image* in knowledge, righteousness and holiness; they have a divine temper and disposition of soul; the principal *bias* of their hearts is towards God and his service. But tho' they are thus born *after God* and *of God*, yet they are not thereby made *God*. That which is by way of *substance* or *essence* in him is only by way of *accident* in us. Neither,

3. Doth it consist in an *outward profession* of *Christ* or his ways. The *foolish virgins* had large *lamps*, but no *oil*, Matth. xxv. A man may be reform'd from *paganism* or *popery* to the profession of true christianity, and yet be a stranger to this *work* of God. Nor,

4. In the enjoyment of *outward privileges*, such as, baptism and the Lord's supper, and others of the like nature. The *Jews* of old depended upon these outward privileges and prerogatives, *Jer.* vii. 4. *Rom.* x. 3. and so do many of the *gospelized world* now: but the divinely inspired *Jeremiah* pungently inculcates the invalidity of outward ordinances, without the thing signified by them, to obtain bliss and glory; therefore he puts the circumcised *Jews*, who were uncircumcised in heart, in a *parallel case* with *Edom*, *Ammon*, *Moab*, heathenish nations, *Jer.* ix. 25. Yea, *Christ* himself had a

controversy with the *Jews* upon the same account : he endeavoured to destroy their fond hopes of heaven grounded upon their outward privileges, and for his plain-dealing he receiv'd abusive treatment, *John* viii. The apostle *Paul* very plainly sheweth the insufficiency of these things, without an inward renovation, *Gal.* vi. 15. Neither,

5. Doth it consist in an *external conformity to the law of God* : for this is something inward, the workmanship of God in the heart. A man may pray, read, hear outwardly, keep the *Sabbath*, be faithful to his word, and just in his dealings, and yet be a stranger to this work of God in the soul : for such were some of the *Pharisees* of old, *Phil.* iii. 6. *Mark* x. 20. and yet our ascended Lord and Saviour positively avers, that *unless our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*, *Matth.* v. 20. Nor,

6. In a *restraint of the old man*. God restrains many whom he never renews : so he did *Abimelech* a heathen, *Gen.* xx. 6. One that is not renew'd may avoid gross sins, through fear, shame, or the absence of opportunities and temptations, or through the influence of nature's light, the precepts of morality, the doctrines of the gospel, and the civil laws of the land. The apostle *Peter* speaks of some that had *escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Christ*, and yet were again entangled in them, *2 Pet.* ii. 20, 23. Restraining grace keeps only from the outward acts of sin, through slavish fear, or some selfish motives ; but saving grace subdues sin at the root, and raises an irreconcilable hatred in the soul against it, *2 Cor.* vii. 11. Nor,

7. In *common gifts or motions of the Holy Ghost*, which are without distinction conferr'd on both the elect

elect and reprobate. It is not a gift of prayer, tongues, utterance, or a faculty of unfolding scripture difficulties: *Judas* had all or most of these, yet was he not *born again*, but a *son of perdition*, *John* xvii. 12. “It is not with men, as with trees, as one observes: for every bud, blossom, or leaf, argues some life in the tree; but every ability to preach or to pray, does not prove this supernatural life in us.” Neither does it consist in the common motions of the *Holy Spirit*: such as, some sight of sin, some grief for it, and wishes after amendment. Personal afflictions, a prospect of eternity in sickness, or other such alarming occurrences, may cause such like workings. *Herod* delighted to hear *John* the Baptist, *Mark* vi. 20. *Felix* trembled when he heard *Paul* preach, *Acts* xxiv. 25. and *Agrippa* was almost persuaded, *Acts* xxvi. 28. which, compar’d with *Paul*’s answer, *v.* 29. may be justly rendred *all to a little*; and even wicked *Balaam* could wish for a happy death, tho’ he did not so well relish a holy life, *Numb.* xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*, *2 Pet.* ii. 15. Nor,

8. Does regeneration consist in a partial change of the soul, or of some of it’s faculties only, but it is a total change of the soul in all it’s powers. There may be strange changes in some of the faculties, and yet no true conversion to God. As particularly, there may be great light, and knowledge of divine truths, with an assent to, and persuasion of their veracity in the mind, *1 Cor.* xiii. 2. *And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, (or, love, for so the word αγαπη signifies) I am nothing.* Also *Heb.* vi. 4. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened-----* *Rom.* ii. 17, 18.

Here we see the *understanding*, the *directive power*, may be so illuminated by the Spirit of God, as to perceive divine truths with a more clear and affecting view than before, without a saving *change*. Also the *will*, which is a *cardinal faculty* of man's *soul*, may be much bow'd, and almost persuaded in some of the unregenerate, *Acts* xxvi. 28. Again, the *conscience*, another power, or, as some say, a reflex act of the mind, may be much *awakened* by the terror of God upon the account of sin, *Gen.* iv. 13, 14. *Acts* xxiv. 25. Also the *passions* may be in some measure *chang'd* in the unregenerate: they may have great *sorrow* for sin, *1 Kings* xxi. 27. *Matth.* xxvii. 4, 5. *joy and delight* from divine objects, *Heb.* vi. 4. *Matth.* xiii. 20. and in attendance upon divine *ordinances*, *John* v. 35. *Isai.* lviii. 2. *desires* after *Christ*, *Mal.* iii. 2. *John* vi. 34. after *grace*, *Matth.* xxv. 8. after *heaven*, *Numb.* xxiii. 10. some *hatred* against sin, *Rom.* ii. 22. *2 Kings* x. 26, 27, 28. some *purposes* to forsake it, *Numb.* xxii. 17, 18. some *love* to God, *Jer.* ii. 2. *Deut.* ix. 6, 24. compar'd to *Christ*, *Matth.* x. 37. to the *people of God* in general, this the parable of the wise and foolish virgins proves, *Matth.* xxv. for it is probable that the *foolish* would not have associated and dwelt with the *wise* so as they did, unless they had *loved* them, *Gal.* iv. 7. to *faithful*, *soul-searching* ministers in particular, *Mark* vi. 20. some *fear* of God, *Jam.* ii. 19. *Jon.* i. 10, 16. some *zeal* for God, *2 Kings* x. 6. *Phil.* iii. 6. *Rom.* x. 2. some *faith* in God, *Acts* viii. 13. *John* ii. 23, 24. some *dependance* and reliance upon God, *Micah* iii. 11. *2 Chron.* xiii. 5-----18. compar'd with *Deut.* ix, 6, 24. and *1 Kings* xv. 3. some confident *persuasion* of their *interest* in his special *favour* and *friendship*, *Matth.* xxv. 7, 11. *John* viii. 33. *2 Chron.* xiii. 10. *Numb.* xxii. 18. All these things

I have mentioned under this head, people may have, and yet want *regenerating grace*, and so be *damned* at last. But I proceed to consider the

Second thing proposed, which was to shew *positively* what *regeneration* is. And,

First, more generally, it may be said to be a *restauration* of God's defaced *image* in man, to some degree of it's primitive *beauty* and *lustre*. Our first parents were made after God's image, in *knowledge*, *righteousness*, and true *holiness*, with *dominion* over the *creatures*, Eccl. vii. 29. Gen. i. 27. Psal. viii. 5. This image of God consisted in an universal *rectitude* of the whole soul, with all it's faculties, powers and affections. The *understanding* being the guide and governor of the soul's faculties, had clear perceptions of the mind and will of God; the *will* was subject to the understanding's directions, having an inherent inclination to will that which the mind, by it's native light, shew'd to be good. The whole train of *passions* freely followed the guidance of these superiour powers, without the least *reluctance*. Thus there was an universal *harmony* at first among all the soul's faculties established by the God of order: but sin has introduced a confusion and *chaos* among these faculties; it has darkned the *understanding*, rendred the *will* obstinate, and misplac'd the *affections* upon diametrically opposite *objects*; hardned the *heart*; stupified the *conscience*; now the blind *will*, which was before a *subject*, usurps the *empire*, and hurries the other powers to a compliance with it's inordinate *dictates*. Now *regeneration* is a *renewing* that gracious *image* of God in us which we have lost: for by it the blind understanding is in some measure *enlightened*, Acts xxvi. 18. the stony heart *mollify'd*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. the disordered affections *rectify'd* and *fix'd* upon the most suitable and noble *objects*, God himself as their *chief good* and *last end*. But

But more particularly,

A *Law-work* generally preceeds this *change* : hence the *law* is said to be a *school-master* to lead us to *Christ*, Gal. iii. 24. which I apprehend is wrought in the following manner :

(1.) There is a *discovery* of *sin*, which the Lord effects by the Law, and by the Spirit, Rom. vii. 7. *I had not known sin, but by the law.* Before this, *Christless* sinners are secure, like *Peter* sleeping in his chains, Acts xii. 6. The Spirit of God concurs with the law. This is one of his first works with unconverted sinners, as is evident from *John* xvi. 8. Before he convinces them of *righteousness*, he convinces them of *sin* ; their eyes are opened, Acts xxvi. 18. Now they see sin in it's loathsome nature, deplorable circumstances, and dreadful consequences ; they begin to see the *holiness* of God, the spiritual *latitude* of his law, and their own corrupt nature : then they are apt to cry out, *Who can stand before this great and dreadful God ?* Now, tho' this discovery of sin begins at a *particular evil*, as with the *Jews*, Acts ii. 37: yet it proceeds to *more* : as *Ezekiel* was led to diverse parts of the temple, to see greater and greater abominations, Ezek. viii. 6. ----- xii. 13.

(2.) There is an *application* of the *merit* of *sin*. God convinces the sinner that all the threatenings belong to him ; yea, he particularly applies them to himself, as *Nathan* his parabolical discourse to *David*, 2 Sam. xii. 7. *I am the man* that these curses are directed against. He hears his condemnation founded by the trumpet of the word ; he sees and feels that he is in the utmost distress, environed with dangers, and can at present see no way of escape open'd, Luke xv. 17. he is in the case of the afflicted pursued *Israelites* at the *Red-sea*, Exod. xiv. 14, 15. This is that *spirit of bondage to fear*, which ordinarily

narily preceeds the *spirit of adoption*, Rom. viii. 15.

(4.) *Compunction*, or sharp anguish for *sin*. The fight of sin and wrath wound the soul, as tho' it were stabb'd with a sword, *Acts* ii. 37. They have such acute pains as if a sharp spear lanc'd their hearts : 'Tis elsewhere call'd the *rending of the heart*, Joel ii. 13. When we are greatly griev'd in soul for sin, so that it even cuts us to the heart to think how we have *dishonoured* God, and *disparag'd* ourselves by it ; when we conceive an aversion to sin, and earnestly desire and endeavour to get clear of the principles of it, and never to return to the practice of it, then we rend our hearts for it, and then will God rend the heavens, and come down to us in mercy. Also this compunction I am treating of, is called breaking up of the fallow ground, *Jer.* iv. 3. *Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns* : Which represents both the necessity and difficulty of it. " An unconvinced heart, says one, is like
 " fallow ground, untill'd, unfenc'd, unfruitful of a-
 " ny thing besides thorns, which is the natural pro-
 " duce of the soil ; which we are bound to get
 " plow'd up by the word of God, *Heb.* iv. 12. o-
 " therwise they will choke our attempts, and blast
 " our hopes, *Hos.* x. 11. " 'Tis also compar'd to a
 taking away the fore-skin of the heart, *Jer.* iv. 4. *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your hearts, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem : lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* i. e. saith Mr. Pool, " take away that
 " brawniness and obstinacy that is upon your hearts,
 " having to do with God that hath respect unto the
 " heart, *Deut.* x. 16. *Ezek.* xlv. 9. *Act.* vii. 51.
 " lest you proceed so far in your obstinacy, that
 " I will not be appeas'd, *Jer.* xxi. 12. *Amos* v. 6. "

(4.) *Enquiry* : when the apostle *Peter's* preach-
 ing,

ing, accompanied with divine *energy*, had wounded the *Jews*, this was the necessary effect of it ; *What shall we do ?* Acts ii. 37.

Thus I thought it necessary, to prevent mistakes, to speak first of that which is previous and preparatory to this *change*. Now I come to speak somewhat briefly of the *change* itself in the several faculties of man's soul. And,

I. The *understanding* is renewed in it's several powers or acts, a light from on high shines into it, whereby it's natural *darkness* is in some measure *dissipated*, so that it hath new apprehensions of things. As natural light was one of the first things produced in the old creation, Gen. i. 3. And God said, *Let there be light, and there was light* : so spiritual light is one of the first in the new, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Formerly the *face* of Christ was *veiled* from the soul, as the *face* of *Moses* from the *Israelites*, but now he sees something of his *peerless beauty* and *transcendent excellency*. Christ is to him as the *apple tree* among the trees of the wood, as the *rose of Sharon* and the *lilly of the valley*, Cant. ii. 1, 2, 3. His very name is as fragrant *ointment poured forth*, and aromatic spices, Cant. i. 3. All other enjoyments are as dross in comparison of him, in the enlightned sinner's esteem, Phil. iii. 8. Now he sees the loathsome and abominable nature of sin, Rom. vii. 13. Now he sees, and experience tells him, that there is no true solace, contentment, or satisfaction to be had in any sublunary trifles ; he sees that such earthly enjoyments are empty of solid good, transient, unsatisfying, and bewitching, contrary to his former apprehension, Isai. lv. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 31. Psal. vi. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. They can find no more nourishment in them for their hungry souls, than a starving man would do in gravel-stones, wind, husks, ashes, Prov. xx. 17. Hos. xii. 1. Luke xv.

16. *Isai.* xliv. 20. That *heart-bolinefs* and circumfpection of life which he was apt formerly to ridicule and deride as *needlefs precisenefs*, affected and foolish singularity, *Cant.* v. 9. 1 *Pet.* iv. 4. he fees not only *necessary*, but *desirable* and *lovely*, *Cant.* vi. 1. *Zech.* viii. 23. *Mal.* iii. 16, 17. Now he fees clearly that that good heart, those good words, good deeds, good meanings, for which he thought God would spare and reward him, deserves nothing less than the revengeful strokes of God's direful justice, *Isai.* lxiv. 6. *Phil.* iii. 7.

(1. He has a new *assent* : his understanding being enlightened to perceive the precious truths of Christ, he assents to them with a kind of plerophory, in a lively, sensible manner, *Luke* i. 1. His assent is not grounded upon opinion, conjecture, or historical credit, as formerly ; and therefore is not light and *superficial*, but firm and *real* : the natural atheism of his heart is in some measure cured, so that he does not so staggeringly assent to divine truths as before.

(2. His *judgment* is *changed*. Formerly it was an absurd paradox to him, if he had all the honours, profits, pleasures his heart could desire, that he should not be happy then : but now he judges by experience, that these things can no more satisfy an enlightened soul, than an adamant stone, or a puff of wind, would satisfy an hungry person. Formerly he used to think that the *new birth* was but a *fancy*, a whim, a fiction, introduced by some hypochondriac, silly, precise people, that imposed upon themselves and others, with dreams and notions ; the effects of melancholy blood, a sickly constitution, or a disordered brain : but now he sees and feels an *absolute necessity* of it, and that he must be *damned* without he obtains it, according to the *solemn* redoubled *asseveration* of the *Lord Christ* in our text.

text. In short, he used to judge of things by their *appearance*, but now he judges of them according to what they are in *reality*.

(3. His *estimate* of things is *changed*. He was wont to think highly of the world and the things of it: however contrarily he might speak, these had the throne of his heart. But now he prefers even the *reproach* of Christ before them, *Heb. xi. 26*. Thus his estimate is changed in respect of honours, pleasures, companions, gifts, parts, privileges, performances; which would take up more time than can be well spared at present to *explain* and *illustrate*. I proceed therefore to another particular.

(4. His *purposes* are *changed*. He has vastly different *designs* from those he was wont to entertain and *indulge*, before his new birth. While he was in a state of security: his principal scope was to get the world, if possible. To this end, he would be frequently, almost continually, framing the most artful and suitable schemes; and if these did not answer as he would have them, then perhaps his sleep would be broken, and his thoughts disturb'd, and he put upon a rack of impatient pain. In short, his purposes were for *sin* and *self*, but *now* they are for *God* and *his soul*; now he strives as much daily to get his heart and affections *deadened* to the world, as he did before to secure and advance his interest in it. Now his anxious mind is often contriving, what measures he should take to *glorify* the blessed God, to *subdue* abominable *sin*, and *advance* the despised *interest* of his dear Lord *Jesus*.

(5. His *reasonings* are *changed*. He was wont in his state of *sin* and *security*, to argue for sin and the world, against Christ and holiness; from the mercy and goodness of God, to liberty, (so called, but it is really the basest bondage) in sinning against him; but now it is the greatest motive to holiness and circumspection.

2. The

2. The *will* is *changed*. It has got a new *bias*, and *center* of it's actings. In his unconverted state, *himself* or the *world* was the center, in reality, (notwithstanding his fair and false flams and flourishes of empty talk to the contrary) to which he *moved*, for which he *acted*, with a furious natural *proneness*, Psalm iv. 6. 2 Tim. iii. 2. But now, God in Christ is the center to which all his actions, whether natural, civil, or sacred, do *bend* and *terminate*. He aims at God's glory in all his actions, universally and singly; the inclinations of his *will* bend towards God freely, from an inward and powerful principle of life, 1 Cor. x. 31. Grace is in him as a *well of water springing up to eternal life*, John iv. 14. His will has an unconstrained motion. Some under the views of a vast eternity, or some afflictive dispensation, have weak motions of heart towards God, Psalm lxxviii. 34. but when the prospect of danger is removed, the motions cease, Psalm lxxviii. 57. like the motion of a clock when the spring is removed. But the motions of a believer's heart are constant, even when outward enforcements are taken away, Psalm cxix. 112. because they flow from an inward and vital cause.

Furthermore, His *will* has new *enjoyments*. In his state of unregeneracy, his life was only a vexatious wandering from vanity to vanity: all the contentment he had was in some worldly *accommodations*, or outward *performances*, Psalm xlvi. Amos vi. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. Rom. x. 3. But now they are as *husks* to him; he can't be satisfied without the children's *bread*, Psalm cxix. 37. ----- cvi. 4. It was an observable saying of *Augustine*, *Tu fecisti cor nostrum, & irrequietum est donec ad te revertatur*, i. e. "thou hast made our heart, and it is restless till it returns to thee." The sinner in his security would be contented with the *husk* and *shell* of

of duties, but now nothing will satisfy him, but the presence of *Jesus* in them; a sight of the *King's face*; a sense of his special love. But the cardinal acts of the will, are *assent* and *dissent*: these are the very hinges upon which it exerts it's *receptive* and *exclusive faculties*, suitable to it's love or dislike to the object proposed, *John* i. 12. ----- v. 40. When *Christ* is offered to the soul appended to the pole of the *gospel*, on his own terms of self-denial, and taking up the cross, the new-born person is willing to want all, that he may have him; to lose all that he may gain him.

3. The affections of the soul are changed: such as, *desire, delight, fear, hatred, joy, love*. New-born persons have frequent and vehement desires after communion with, and conformity to God in *Christ* here, and the full enjoyment of him hereafter, arising from a sight of his beauty and excellency, *Psal.* xlii. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God. Psal.* lxiii. 1, 2, 3, 8. *My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory----- Because thy loving-kindness is better than life----- My soul followeth hard after thee. Psalm* lxxxiv. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Cant.* i. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. Psalm* lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Psal.* cxix. 5, 174. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! I have long'd for thy salvation, O Lord: and thy law is my delight. Rev.* xxii. 20. *He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quick-*

quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. And as their desires are after Christ, so their delight is in him, Cant. i. 4. *The King hath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.* Cant. i. 13. *A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me ; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.* Cant. ii. 3. *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.* Cant. v. 16. *His mouth is most sweet :* (i. e. the communications of his love by his word are most delightful) *yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.* And as they delight in him, so they fear to offend him, and that even in the least things, 1 *Thess.* v. 22. They are apt to cry out when they are tempted, as Joseph, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?* Gen. xxxix. 9. They see the baseness and feel the bitterness of sin, and therefore fear it, Lam. iii. Having in remembrance the worm-wood and the gall. They feel a sense of the divine goodness, and therefore fear sinning against it, *Hos.* iii. 5. *Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days,* Rom. ii. 4. And as they fear sin, so they hate it universally and irreconcilably, *Psal.* cxix. 104. and cannot at any time fall in love with it as formerly, 1 *John* iii. 3-----10. Again, The objects of their love are changed : God's people, his laws, his image, his ordinances, are the objects to which their affections freely flow. Now the new-born person loves sincerely and fervently those whom he once despis'd, and pities those whom he once lov'd and admir'd, and disdains their society, their scoffs and threatnings, as well as their destructive gains, and perishing insipid pleasures, *Psal.*

Psal. xv. 4. ----- cxix. 115. 2 Kings .iii. 14.
 Psal. ii. 1, 4. ----- lii. 6, 7. Isai. xxxiii. 15.
 Psal. cxli. 4. Heb. xi. 24. Now he sees that the
 people of God are the *most excellent* persons on *earth*,
 as much preferable to others, as *jewels*, the *stones* of
 a *crown*, *refined gold*, a *royal diadem*, is to common
pebbles, *dröfs*, and *rubbish*, Mal. iii. 17. Zech. ix.
 16. Lam. iv. 2. Isai. lxii. 3. Psal. xvi. 3. as much
 excelling others, as *wheat* does *chaff*, Matth. xiii.
 30. Psal. i. 4. *light*, *darkness*, Matth. v. 14. Eph.
 v. 1. *cedars* and *myrtle-trees*, the *tares* and *thorns*,
 Psal. xcii. 12. Isai. lv. 13. Matth. xiii. 38. Cant.
 ii. 2. as much as the *most potent kings*, the *basest*
slaves, Rev. i. 6. Acts viii. 23. Isai. lxi. 1. as much
 as *lambs* and *doves* are preferable in their qualities to
goats, *swine*, *dogs* and *foxes*, Hof. iv. 14. Matth. x.
 16. ----- xxv. 33. ----- vii. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 22.
 Luke xiii. 32. and *vipers*, Matth. iii. 7. There-
 fore the new-born person resorts to God's people ;
 covets their company, (which he before shun'd) that
 with them he may seek *Jesus*, Acts iv. 23. Cant.
 i. 7. ----- vi. 1. When the blinded jaylor came
 to have his eyes *opened*, he soon *washed* the *wounds*
 he had *made* before, by many and cruel *stripes*, Acts
 xvi. 32, 33. Their *love* is fixed on *God* in *Jesus*,
 as their highest *good* and last *end* ; as their compleat,
 satisfying, and everlasting *portion*, Lam. iii. 24.
 Psal. xvi. 5. ----- lxxiii. 26. which shews itself
 in lively, warm, vigorous *actings*, so that the whole
 soul feels sometimes the sweet pains, and refreshing
 qualms of a love-sickness after *Christ*, Cant. v. 8.
 All the waters of affliction cannot quench this love,
 but makes it burn more brightly, as oil cast into
 the fire, Cant. viii. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thine*
heart, *as a seal upon thine arm* : *for love is strong as*
death----- Their *sorrow* is also *changed*, as to it's
 objects. They were wont in their carnal and se-
cure

cure state, to mourn principally about worldly losses and disappointments, *Psal.* iv. 6. 2 *Cor.* vii. 10. that either they could not amass and obtain, or retain such a quantity of worldly pelf, as their greedy desires longed for : or their trouble principally center'd upon the loss of their relations or friends, or their *credit* and worldly *comfort*, *Gen.* xxvii. 38. 1 *Sam.* xv. 30. But now they mourn chiefly over their sins against God, *Psal.* li. 4. that they are so many, so heinous ; that they have continued in sin so long, *Rom.* vi. 21. that they are so inwardly and universally corrupted by it, *Rom.* vii. 24. And they do not only grieve that they themselves have sinned against such a good God, but that others also do grievously reproach the Almighty and affront his majesty, by contemning his authority, profaning his sacred name, violating his *Sabbath*, flighting his word and ordinances, opposing his truths, and abusing his people, *Ezek.* ix. 4. 2 *Pet.* ii. 7, 8. *Psal.* cxix. 136. *Lam.* iv. 2. They also mourn an absent God : the withdrawing of his comfortable presence from them distresses their spirits, *Psal.* xlii 5. *Cant.* iii. 1, 2, 3. ----- v. 6, 8. The numerous crouds of wicked people, the smallness of the number of those that are truly godly, and the little success of the gospel of Christ, affords matter of great sorrow to new-born persons, *Matth.* vii. 13, ----- xx. 16. ----- xxii. 14. *Nab.* vii. 1, 2. *Psal.* iii. 1. *Isai.* liii. 1.

4. The *conscience* is changed. As before it was not able to perform it's offices or functions, *viz.* to apply, convince, or tremble at the word : but now, when the soul feels the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, what a tender sense fills the renewed conscience ? for what small things will it smite, rebuke, and check the sinner ? how strongly will it *bind* to duty, and *bar* against sin ? The consciences of the most of ungodly people are large, secure, and

and mostly silent, if it be not when they commit gross and notorious crimes, *Titus* i. 15. But the consciences of regenerate persons, being purged from dead works, *Heb.* ix. 14. do wake and rebuke sharply for small offences, *1 Sam.* xxiv. 5. and puts the sinner into distress and anguish, *Gen.* xliii. 21. Now it is the continued labour of the new-born person to get and keep a good conscience, *2 Cor.* i. 12. *Acts* xxiv. 16.

5. The *memory* : now it is more apt to embrace and retain divine things than formerly, *Cant.* i. 4. *Psal.* ciii. 18. ----- cxix. 11. The regenerate person endeavours to lay up the sayings of *Jesus* in the cabinet of his memory, *Matth.* xxvi. 75. I confess that regenerating grace does not change the *natural* imperfections of the human constitution, only the *moral*. If a person has naturally a weak memory, it cannot be reasonably expected that grace will strengthen the natural faculty, for it's design is not to heal the *body* but the *soul*, it only turns the *vein* of the thoughts and affections on divine subjects, and helps to perceive better, fundamental truths, *1 John* ii. 20, 27. and makes a person the more desirous to retain them, but it don't enlarge or strengthen the faculty itself ordinarily ; a person may be a strong christian, have an affectionate *heart*, and a holy humble *practice*, and yet have but a weak *memory* : but in the mean time, it is surely the practice of new born persons to pore much upon divine things, *Psal.* i. 2. ----- civ. 34. ----- cxix. 97, 99. Therefore when they forget precious truths they have heard explained, (their affections being fixed upon them) they are grieved. But

6. Their *conversation* is *changed* : they were wont to be like moles grovelling in the *earth*, now their mind and conversation is in *heaven*, *Phil.* iii. 20. *Heb.* xiii. 14. They are ashamed and blush at their

their former conversation, *Rom. vi. 21.* They have changed their former masters, *sin, satan,* and the *world,* and broke their detestable league with them and *death,* *Rom. vi. 14, 16---23. Isai. xxviii. 15, 18. Gal. v. 24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* The new born person maintains a continual conflict with *sin,* *Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 23.* Now he does not only endeavour to *restrain* the outward *act,* but to *crucify* the *root* of his inward corruption, *Psal. li.* Not only to cut off some branches, but all, even that *sin* which has the strongest *seat* in his constitution, *Psal. xviii. 23.* He endeavours to repress the first motions of *sin,* and to flee the appearance of evil, being diffident of his own *strength,* and afraid to offend his God, *1 Thess. v. 22.*

But I proceed to the third thing proposed.

Thirdly, To offer *reasons* urging the *necessity* of *regeneration.* And,

1. The universal *corruption* of our nature shews the indispensable *necessity* of *renewing grace,* as in the *6. v.* of our context : for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord,* *Heb. xii. 14. Rom. viii. 13.* Is it reasonable to suppose, that such a *holy God* as *Jehovah* is, who cannot look on *sin* but with *abhorrence,* should receive such polluted wretches, as unconverted sinners are, into his *complacential embraces?*

2. Because while unconverted, the *law* condemns us, *Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 19.* which sentence cannot be removed any otherwise but by faith in Christ, *Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18.* which no unconverted person has ; for if he had, it would change his heart and practice, *Gal. v. 6. 2 Thess. i. 11. James ii. 14.* He may indeed have an historical, or temporary faith, but that won't do for salvation, *James ii. 19, 20.*

3. Because of the *stability* and *firmness* of God's *word.*

word. He who cannot lie hath spoken it, and *heaven* and *earth* may and shall pass away, but not one tittle that God hath spoken, shall pass away unaccomplished, *Matth. xxiv. 35.* Therefore *regeneration* is necessary to *salvation*.

4. The *consideration* of the *nature* of the *happiness* of *heaven*, with the *respect* that *regeneration* hath to it, plainly manifests the *necessity* of it. Surely the *nature* of future happiness is pure and spiritual, consisting in the *vision* and *fruition* of a holy God, who is a *spirit*, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* and in the *society* and *social worship* of *saints* and *angels*, and such pleasures and employments as the beauty of the objects and other circumstances of the place, may be supposed to imply. Now, what suitability is there between a carnal unrenewed mind, and the spiritual and pure pleasures of heaven? Does not pleasure spring from the suitability between the object and the faculty? What pleasure then can be expected by the unregenerate in heaven itself, if they were carried there in their present condition? (tho' they may be sure in the mean time, that while such, they will never have the trial, *Rev. xxi. 27.* ----- *xxii. 15.*) there is such a *discord* between their present *dispositions*, and the *temper* and *entertainments* and *employments* of *heaven*, for these are holy and *spiritual*, but they are *carnal* and *sensual*. This Dr. Scot expresses beautifully: "For alas! (if we consider the matter
 " rightly) how could souls of their relish and complex-
 " sion, find a proper employment for them-
 " selves in the regions of bliss? There are no
 " wanton amours among those heavenly lovers;
 " no rivers of wine, among their rivers of pleasure,
 " to gratify their boundless sensuality; no parasite
 " to flatter their lofty pride; no miseries to feed
 " their meagre envy; no mischiefs to tickle their
 " their devilish revenge: but all the felicities with
 " which

“ which that state abounds, (*viz.* praise, love, con-
 “ templation) are such that they would lothe and
 “ nauseate them, as too pure and refined for their
 “ depraved appetites ; and not improbably, (if they
 “ had their own option) desire to fly to hell for
 “ shelter, to spirits of their own depravity, rather
 “ than stay to be tormented in a heaven so in-
 “ congruous to their nature. ” So that if these men
 would be happy they must either find out a new
 heaven, or get new hearts.

Bishop *Beveridge* expresses himself thus upon this
 head : “ Supposing it should please God to take us
 “ all up immediately into the highest heavens, and
 “ there place us around our blessed saviour ; all such
 “ as are real saints among us, as love God above all
 “ things, and have prepar’d their minds for spiri-
 “ tual enjoyments, how glad would they be to see
 “ their redeemer, shining in all his glory ? how
 “ suddenly would they strike up with the choir of
 “ heaven, in singing the praises of him that brought
 “ them thither ? what infinite pleasure would
 “ they take in the place, employment, company,
 “ and every thing they see there ? But as for others
 “ who are still in their sins, and mind only earth-
 “ ly things, how sad and disconsolate would they
 “ be ? they would wonder to see the saints so plea-
 “ sant and joyful : for, as for their parts, they would
 “ see nothing there to take delight in ; in the midst
 “ of light they would be still in darkness, and in
 “ sorrow in the midst of joys ; they would not
 “ hear the heavenly music, or if they did, it
 “ would sound harsh, and be all discords to them :
 “ they could not taste these spiritual dainties, or if
 “ they did, they could not relish or find any sweet-
 “ ness in them ; they could not see the face of
 “ God, or if they did, they would not be pleas’d,
 “ but terrify’d and confounded at it : and all this

“ for the want of a true principle of grace and holiness, without which a blind man may as well delight in pictures, the deaf man in music, or a brute beast in metaphysics, as men of such tempers, either in heaven, or God himself. ”

Again, regeneration hath such a relation to our salvation, that it is indeed a part and beginning of it. *Gratia est aurora gloriæ* ; grace is the very dawn of glory, differing only in degree and duration, from the happiness of heaven. “ The truth is, (saith Stanhope) God in his wisdom hath so ordered the matter, so admirably contriv’d our nature and our duty, that virtue and happiness, grace and glory are one and the same thing, differing only in the circumstances and several prospects we view them under. The good man begins his heaven upon earth, and finishes there what is imperfect here ; for the more he masters his sensual appetites, and gets above the world----- the more he is spiritualiz’d, and made meet to be a partaker with the saints in light. ”

Pray consider seriously that precious, but awful place of holy scripture, *Gal. vi. 15.* It’s observable here that the apostle was speaking of some who desired to make a fair shew in the flesh, and therefore urg’d the necessity of circumcision, whom the apostle inform’d, and assur’d, that *in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail’d any thing, i. e.* to salvation, *but the new creature.* Circumcision was certainly an ordinance of God’s own appointment, a seal of the covenant between God and his people, *Rom. iv. 11.* a badge of distinction between them and the infidel nations, *Rom. iii. 2.* a sign of their original pravity, and of the necessity of inward sanctity, *Jer. iv. 4. Col. ii. 13.* Yet the apostle informs those who thought they were bound to observe it, that without an internal change

change, these suppos'd priviledges would avail nothing : and by a parity of reason (as Dr. Edwards justly observes) " he must be interpreted to speak to
 " us, that our sacramental washing in baptism,
 " our spiritual gifts and endowments, our profound
 " knowledge and learning, our observation of the
 " ordinances of Christ, and our outward acts of religious worship, will all avail us nothing, unless
 " we have a new principle implanted in us, such
 " as influences our lives, and produces evangelical
 " obedience. " But I proceed to the

Fourth thing propos'd, which was to improve the doctrine. And,

USE 1. It informs us that the way to be made a member of the invisible church is by regeneration : for there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the lamb's book of life, Rev. xxi. 17.

2. It informs us of the love of God, in revealing that way to us, Hos. viii. 12. which should strike our admiration, and awake our gratitude.

3. It informs us of the love of Christ, in purchasing, after such a painful manner, that life for his people, to which this way leads, 2 Cor. viii. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 2 Tim. i. 10. Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel ; that having your affections dead to, and weaned from, all enjoyments here, your life may be hid with Christ in God ; that when he who is your life appears, you may appear with him, Col. iii. 4.

4. It informs us of the emptiness and insufficiency of all outward and legal performances, to obtain an actual interest in the purchas'd happiness, without

good principles of action ; such as, a *new heart*, and *transcendent love* to the divine *Majesty*. Luke vi. 43. *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit : neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Therefore, according to the words of *Jesus*, if you would have the fruits good, you must make the tree good, Matth. xii. 33. *For God is a spirit*, and therefore will not accept of, or be pleas'd with any worship but that which is agreeable to his nature, John iv. 24.

USE 2. Of examination. Now that you may know your present state and condition, I shall propose some characters of regeneration.

Now the first property of regeneration is, *divine life*. As *natural life* is the natural product of generation, so is a *spiritual life* of regeneration, Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 10. Now this *divine life* has these following properties, by which it may be known, *analogous* or agreeable to the properties of a natural life.

(1.) *Breath* : without this a *natural life* would soon expire, *Psal.* civ. 29. Thus it is with the *spiritual*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word.* Some render the original words λογικὴν γάλα *rational milk*, such as is fit for the nourishment, not of the *body*, but of the *mind*. A true convert desires the sincere milk, the pure word of God, not blended or diluted with adulterating, depraving, and debasing mixtures. 'Tis the natural property of every kind of life to desire food suited to it's nature, without which it can't subsist. Now as the natural man chiefly longs after the enjoyments of this world, *Psal.* iv. 6. so does the new born person after heavenly enjoyments, *Col.* iii. 1.

(2.) *Sense*. As a natural life feels what opposeth it, grapples with it's enemy, and if stronger, proves victorious ; so it is eminently in the *divine life* ;
which

which having such supernatural assistances, proves too hard for it's opponents, *Gal. v. 17. 1 John v. 4, 18. ----- lli. 9.*

(3.) *Growth.* 'Tis natural for children to grow fast, if some uncommon accident don't prevent it; and that not in the *head* only, for indeed such are distempered with the rickets, but in all other *parts proportionably*. So do babes in Christ grow fast, if not distempered, *2 Thes. i. 3.* and that not only in *knowledge*, but in *faith, love, holiness.* *2 Pet. iii. 18. 1 Cor. xiii. 11. When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child, when I grew a man, I put away childish things.* So it is with the growing christian, they put away childish things; and this among the rest, *viz.* entertaining a fond imagination, that he shall be always *dandled* on his *father's knee*, or in his *Lord's lap*, or always *embrac'd* in his *husband's arms*. When he was but a babe in Jesus, he was apt to conclude his father had quite abandon'd him, if he lost sight of his face but for a little; if he wanted the sweet sense of his love, he was peevish and dejected: but now he knows better, that he is not to live by *sense* but by *faith*, *Gal. ii. 20.* Tho' he retains still an earnest desire after communion with God, yet it is more discreet, believing and submissive; and when they can't perceive any growth in themselves after some time, they grieve and mourn. A child of God not only weeps at his birth but afterwards. Mr. *Burkitt* has a very good observation upon this, "that as natural children come crying into the world, so no spiritual child is still-born or born dumb." *Acts ix. 11.* We may justly reckon those graceless, and unrenewed persons, who do not earnestly *long and labour* after *growth*, or mourn not for their little proficiency. *Heb. vi. 1. Phil. iii. 14.* They that are contented with stinted measures of supposed grace,

in reality have no saving grace at all. 1 Cor. xv. 8. Eph. iii. 18.

(4.) *Motion*. This is an inseparable property of a natural life, Acts xvii. 28. When we see any thing stand *stock still* for a considerable time, without the least *motion*, we know it is *dead*; e. g. when we observe a statue void of motion, with its eyes fixed, for some space of time, we are soon convinc'd, for all its *fair face*, that it has *no life*; so when we behold professors of christianity having but an empty *form*, without the powerful and progressive *practice* of piety, 2 Tim. iii. 5. mayn't we judge them, and should not they judge themselves to be (notwithstanding of their fair *pretences*) *dead idols* in a spiritual sense, void of the life of *Jesus*.

(5.) A *generative faculty*, when grown to maturity: so those that have a divine life, labour to communicate it to others, John iv. 28, 29. Luke xxii. 32. Here we may apply justly that of the poet, *Nascitur indigne per quem non nascitur alter. He is unworthy of life himself, who is not the cause of it to another.*

2. *Likeness*. The father begets a son in his own *likeness*, so did the first *Adam*, Gen. v. 3. and so does the second, John iii. 6. The *image* of the first is of the *earth earthly*, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49. *For he that is born of the flesh is flesh*, John iii. 6. i. e. exceedingly corrupt and sinful; not only fleshly but *flesh*; abstracts denote great degrees of what is spoken, Eph. v. 8. Man by a sinful indulgence of his appetite, Gen. iii. 6. prostituted the dominion of his soul to the tyranny of sense; so that now before conversion he is quite sunk in sensuality; instead of deserving the honourable *character* of a living soul as formerly, Gen. ii. 7. he now incurs that just, but sarcastical one of *flesh*! his reason and all his noble powers are so degraded, unhing'd, and corrupted; he

he acts with such indifferency about *eternal*, and with such vigour about *temporal* things, as if he had no soul, but was wholly *flesh*, a meer master *beast*. But the *image* of the second *Adam* is *heavenly* and *spiritual*, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49. *For he that is born of the spirit is spirit*, John iii. 6. *i. e.* his soul has recovered it's just, tho' lost, *empire* over the senses and brutish appetites, and is now guided and governed by the influence and direction of the *holy Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1, 4. As the natural parent communicates of his nature to the child, so those that are born of God, are said to partake of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. *i. e.* they have a certain resemblance of the *moral, communicable perfections* of the *Deity*, wrought in them: *they are holy as he is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. *merciful as their father is merciful*, Luke vi. 36. *perfect as their father in heaven is perfect*, Matth. v. 48. *i. e.* they endeavour earnestly after perfection of *degrees* as well as of *parts*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Eph. v. 1, 2. So long as men are contrary to God in their generally prevailing *dispositions*, and course of *action*, we may tell them as our Lord the perverse *Jews*, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*

3. *Love.* A child hath a love to his father and brethren, which the law of nature *teaches*, and the *likeness* that is between them *confirms*: he is a very monster in nature that is void of this affection. Thus the new born christian hath,

(1.) A *predominant love* to God in Christ, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Matth. x. 37.

(2.) A *permanent love*, John xv. 9, 10.

(3.) A *panting, longing love*, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

(4.) An *operative and efficacious love*, 2 Cor. v. 14. John xiv. 21. Rom. vi. 4, 5. And so he has a *real, effectual, universal, and well-grounded affection*

Elion to the children of God, as his brethren in Christ. His affection don't consist in windy words, 1 John iii. 17, 18. neither is his love limited to a party of his own denomination, temper, or sentiments: no, no! that is too narrow a circle for truly christian love, (such a confin'd affection is but a natural selfish party zeal, which don't deserve the name of love) which extends itself to all that carry the *image* of the *holy* God, and speak in the language of *Canaan*, of whatever *nation* they be, or *denomination* they bear; and as he loves all christians for that of God he sees in them, so consequently his affection is carried forth with a greater degree of ardor towards such as excel others in holiness, humility, and circumspection; and that not with a *fearful* but *complacential* respect, *Psal.* xvi. 3. 1 John iv. 8. The

4. *Character*, is that *change* of the *practice*, which I described in the doctrinal part of this discourse; which I think is rather an *effect* of the *new birth* than a *part* of it. It is observable that in every generation, there is a great change in the old creation, to which this work of God, is for many and weighty reasons compared, *Eph.* ii. 10. There was an admirable alteration, when the present most beautiful and regular *system* of things was produced by the agency of the infinite Spirit of God, (who moved upon the face of the waters) out of the former disorder, dark *mass*, and confused *chaos*. So, is there not an admirable *change*, when a prophane, ignorant *sottish creature* is turned into a *sober*, holy, heavenly *christian*? "Give me, says *Lactantius*, a man as prophane and abusive, as lewd and lascivious, as can be imagined; and with a few instructions of God, I will make him as meek and innocent as a lamb: *lib.* 2." could ever any of the philosophers do this? In short, such a *change* deserves our admiration more than if a *clod* of *earth* were turned into

into a *star of heaven* : this is no less a change than from *darkness to light*, from *death to life*, *Eph. v. 8.*

And now, *brethren*, I pray you for Christ's sake, *examine* yourselves, whether you have had the experience of these things ; it's easy to be mistaken in this matter, and a mistake is dangerous, *Jer. xvii. 9. Prov. xiv. 12.* I shall propose a few questions to your consciences, from what I have been treating of, and I beg you would answer them impartially, as in the presence of *God.* And,

Quest. 1. Has sin been discovered, and applied to your consciences with power, both in respect of it's vile nature, and dreadful effects, by the *law of God*, and the *Spirit of God*, as I before described ?

Quest. 2. Have you been made to see your lost and deplorable state by nature, so as to be exceedingly distress'd, and put to a soul-afflicting plunge and loss, about obtaining deliverance out of it, and shut up to Christ as the only door of hope ? *Acts ii. 37. ----- xiv. 27. John x. 7.*

Quest. 3. Hast thou, O sinner ! been made to inquire after and seek for relief, with *anguish* of soul ? *Acts ix.*

Quest. 4. Has the *Lord Jesus* been discovered by his word and spirit to your inquiring, burdened, anxious soul, in his mediatorial excellency and sufficiency ? *Matth xi. 21. Gal. i. 16.*

Quest. 5. And have you with deliberation and resolution, unreservedly *closed* with the offer'd *redeemer*, upon the terms of discipleship he has specified ; viz. of taking up his cross, denying yourselves and following him, *John i. 12. Luke ix. 23. ----- xiv. 26.* That is, have you been, and are you willing, and heartily resolved, to quit freely and cheerfully your dearest, natural and civil interests, your *friends, relations, estates, lives, liberties, respectively*, if called to it, for the defence of truth, and

readily embrace *shame, solitude, poverty and death*? Are you willing also to abandon your own righteousness, all your religious performances in *point of dependance*; and *absolutely*, immediately, and freely forsake all your darling lusts, and embrace strict holiness? What sayest thou sinner? how is it with thee in these respects, willing or not? What, does that man say it's hard? I cannot now! wretched soul! as the Lord lives thou art a dead man.

Quest. 6. Are old things passed away? 2 Cor. v. 17. As particularly,

(1.) Is thy old *blindness* removed? 1 Pet. i. 4.

(2.) Thy old *security* disturb'd? Luke xi. 21.

(3.) Thy old *hope* sapp'd at the foundation? Rom. vii. 9.

(4.) Thy old *enmity* against God's people subdued? Cant. vi. 1.

(5.) Thy old carnal worldly thoughts, affections and practice *altered*, or are they still as they were? Why then I may say to thee as the apostle *Peter* to *Simon Magus*, Acts viii. 21, 23. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

Quest. 7. Are all things made new? 2 Cor. v. 17. As particularly,

(1.) Hast thou that new *light* in the understanding? Acts xxvi. 18.

(2.) That *pliability* in the will, Psal. cx. 3. Acts ix. 6.

(3.) That *proneness* in the affections God-ward, and heaven-ward, which I before described? Col. iii. 2.

(4.) That *tendernefs* of conscience?

(5.) That *tenaciousness* of memory respecting divine things? Psal. cxix. 98.

(6.) That *reformation* in practice, which was before described?

Quest. 8.

Quest. 8. Have you had that *life of God*, that *likeness to God*, that *love for God and his people*, which was before spoken of?

Quest. 9. Is your *obedience evangelical, universal, continual*? But I proceed to the

3. *USE*, which is of *conviction and terror*, to those that are not *born again*. But *who are they*, and *what may afford them necessary terror*?

First, more *generally*, you are they who cannot with a good conscience say *Yea*, in answer to the nine questions I proposed before.

But more *particularly*,

1. May persons make a strict profession of piety, and be admitted to, and enjoy religious privileges, and so pass for christians, and yet be unconverted? How far then are you from this blessed *change*, who even *scorn to profess Christ and piety*, who *disdain and disclaim* the very name *Saint*, as a term of *reproach*, a *badge of dishonour*, and *grin and show your teeth*, (*silly souls!*) when the very word is but mentioned in your hearing? remember for this you shall *gnash your teeth in hell*, except ye repent. I suppose you think to be saved without the *new birth*, in a way of your own contrivance, (*O blind moles!*) ay, but then the devil, your dear father, and your brethren the sons of *Belial*, the whole *crew* of *prophane unclean rebels*, and *venemous vermin*, the *burdened earth* now *bears*, or *hell contains*, must be saved along with you, and a pretty company you would make all together! would you not? a fine heaven indeed! How can you expect that *Christ* will *own* you *hereafter*, when you will not *own* him *here*?

2. May people be convinced of sin, and of their lost and deplorable condition because of sin, so as to be in great distress about it, without being *new born*? Alas then! what will become of you who are yet secure and asleep in sin?

3. May

3. May persons be *restrained* from gross impieties, and yet be in a state of death, estranged from this *divine birth*? O! what will then become of you, who give a *loose* to prophaneness, swearing, whoring, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, uncleanness, fraud, and the derision of what is good? Is not *burnings*, *burnings* from God, *burnings* hotter than *Sodom's flame*, like to be your portion?

4. May persons attain the *form* of *piety*, and be *externally regular* in the performance of all religious *duties*, and yet not be *new born*? then wretched sinners! how far are you from this divine birth, who *prophane* God's name, *slight* his word and *ordinances*, by neglecting to *attend* upon the *one*, and to *seek* preparation for the *other*, who as fearlessly as prophanely, violate his holy sabbaths, and neglect many positive duties of religion? read that passage of God's word, and blush and tremble, *Matth. v. 20.*

5. May people have great *gifts*, and good *moti- ons*, and want this *new birth*, I have been treating upon? then what will become of you, *ignorant souls*, especially such of you as are *willingly ignorant*? how far are you from a sound *conversion* to God, which begins in light and *knowledge*? 1 Cor. iv. 6. And how far will you be at last from obtaining that *inheritance conversion* qualifies persons for? *Isai. xxvii. 11. 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.*

6. May persons have a partial *alteration* upon some or all the *powers* of their souls, and be almost persuaded to be real christians, and yet be void of the *new birth*? what will become of you, *hardned wretches*, every of whose *faculties* are perhaps *alter- ed* for the *worse*, whose necks are as an iron sinew, and whose brow is brass? *Pharisees*, *heathens* and *devils* outdo you in what is good. The *Pharisees* in most or in all the outward duties of religion, *Phil. iii.* the *heathens* in their morality (perhaps) *e. g.*
the

the *Turks*, or some of them, have had a greater concern about their souls than thou hast : remember trembling *Felix*, and be ashamed of thy horrible stupidity : yea, the very *devils* tremble, and yet thou art senseless. O man ! is thy breast *adamant*, or thy bowels *iron*, that thou thus flightest the terrors of the *Almighty*, which set themselves in battle array against thee ? canst thou imagine that thou art *new born*, or shall be saved in this condition ? no, no : be not deceived ; the devil himself would find as easy an admission into heaven, as thou in thy present condition, as our text demonstrates.

7. May persons have a *zeal* for religion, as *Jehu* and others, and yet be unconverted ? O then ! what will become of you *lifeless, listless, careless Galeo's* in religious affairs, who do not care a straw whether religion prospers or not, if you can but get worldly prosperity, if you can but with *Gebazi* get the changes of raiment, with *Judas* carry the *bag*, or with cursed *Achan* get the *wedges* of gold, you care not perhaps, tho' for it, you should betray Christ's cause, and bring judgments upon others ? but won't such luke-warm, selfish wretches be *spued out of Christ's mouth* ? Rev. iii. 16. How far are ye, poor souls, from this *divine birth* ?

8. May unconverted persons come so far as to love God's people, *associate* with them, and delight in hearing of *God's word*, and *attending* upon his *ordinances* ? how far then are those from *regeneration*, or the way to it, who do not come half so far as *hypocrites* in this ? instead of *associating* with God's people, they carefully avoid their company, *deride* them, and spitefully *abuse* them, and most contemptuously *neglect* opportunities of hearing *God's word*, instead of delighting in it, and that forsooth because the preacher won't be false to God and souls, and preach *smooth things* according to their *fancy*. Won't
Herod

Herod, that heard *John the baptist* gladly, rise up in judgment at last, and condemn the haughty and contemptuous *wretches* of this generation?

9. May persons be brought to mourn for sin, with bitterness and *anguish*, and yet be strangers to the new birth, as *Ahab* and *Judas*? how far then are those *monsters* in nature from conversion, who instead of mourning for their impieties, *boast* of them, and so *glory* in their *shame*? But what are the miseries of those and all other kinds of unconverted sinners?

Ans. 1. Ye are *blind men*, Acts xxvi. 18. Ye see not the beauty of *holiness*, of *Christ* and *heaven*, otherwise ye would not live as ye do, *John* iv. 10.

(2.) *Poor men*, however you swell and strut in worldly wealth and grandeur, *Rev.* iii. 17.

(3.) *Mad men*, *Psal.* xiv. 1. compared with x. 1. *Luke* xv. 17. You act like distracted men, in preferring sin to holiness, perishing sensual gratifications, to the pure, finless and everlasting delights that are at God's right hand. Don't you act like fools, in preferring your *lusts* to *God* and *Christ*? your *worldly gain*, which lasts but for a moment, to an immortal *crown of life*? and does not your folly and madness eminently appear, in your daring to affront such a *sovereign infinite Majesty*, whom you can neither *overcome*, *deceive* or *avoid*, whose *loving-kindness* is better than *life*, but whose *anger* is worse than *death*? and you will find it so in a little time, when you shall wish for death as a sanctuary from it, but shall not obtain your desire.

(4.) *Dead men*, wholly void of divine life, *Eph.* ii. 1.

(5.) *Darkned men*, or men under the power of darkness, *Eph.* v. 8. *Col.* i. 13. By which metaphor the scriptures express all kinds of misery, *Psal.* xxiii. 4. *Matth.* xxii. 13. *Isai.* 1. 10.

(6.) *Possessed men*, under the power and government, and in the possession of the devil, his slaves, his vassals,

vassals, *Luke xi. 21. 1 John iii. 8. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 26.*

(7.) You are *curfed men*, cursed by the God that made you, which none can revoke but himself, and which has declared he will not, unless ye repent, *Gal. iii. 10. Luke xiii. 3.*

(8.) You are *condemned men*, *John iii. 18.*

(9.) *Guilty men*, *Mark iv. 12.* And remember, God has said, he will by *no means clear the guilty*, *Numb. xiv. 18.*

(10.) You are *bereaved men*, seclused from, and bereaved of all the notices, and sweet intimations of God's peculiar *favour* and *friendship*, in this world, or in the next. You are without God in the world, and what can be worse than this? *Eph. ii. 12.* And as you are justly deprived of his *love*, so you are continually exposed to his *wrath*, *John iii. 36.* You are the very children of the devil by *imitation* and *possession*, the seed of the serpent, *Gen. iii. 15. 1 John iii. 9, 10. John viii. 44.*

(11.) *Miserable men* : you are not only void of true light, life, comfort, in this world, but of any interest in the inheritance of God's chosen in the next, as our text asserts, and are intitled to a very contrary portion, *Eph. ii. 3.*

(12.) *Murdering men*, cruel murderers, self-murderers, foul-murderers, *Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. xxxiii. 11.*

(13.) *Inexcusable men* : your eternal damnation is but the natural and necessary fruits of your own wickedness and obstinacy, in rejecting against your own souls, God's repeated warnings and invitations; and therefore it is but justice, and that not owing to any rigorous *severity* of God, but intirely to your *own cruelty* and *barbarity* against *yourselves*, that you should perish, *Hos. xiii. 9. Acts xiii. 46.* And this you will be forced to *own* at last, to *God's honour*, and your own *shame*, *Matth. xxii. 11, 12.* For
you

you have flighted the *remedy*, provided with infinite *cost*, for sin. This will make your *sin inexcusable*, your *damnation unavoidable*, and yourselves *unworthy of pity*, because your misery is a voluntary misery, but the fruits of your own choice, *Psal.* xcv. 8, 11. *Matth.* xxii. 3, 5. ----- xxiii. 37. *Prov.* xxix. 1. What unspeakable pain will your reflexions upon these things cause in your consciences to eternity! *Mark* ix. 44. *Isai.* lxvi. 24. O! think of these things and apply them to heart, before it is too late, and never rest until you get converting grace.



*An Expostulatory Mournful ADDRESS to
the UNCONVERTED, with some DI-
RECTIONS to the REGENERATE.*

Added by Way of APPENDIX, to the pre-
ceeding SERMON.

Dear Brethren :



YOU have heard the *nature and necessity of regeneration opened*, with it's peculiar and distinguishing *characters described*, in the preceeding sermon : now don't you see that you are without this gracious *change*, that you have not been *convinced of and humbled for sin*, as was explained, nor distress'd about your lost state, so as to be shut up to *Christ*, as the only *door of hope* ?

Don't you see that you want the experience of an inward, universal and effectual *alteration* of all your *faculties* and powers, a thorough *change* of your *practice* ?

practice? Alas! are you not yet as carnal, and worldly minded as ever? don't you yet retain your old *shyness* of, and *enmity* against God's dear children, your old aversion to strict holiness? Alas! do ye not retain your old carnal security, and false hope of heaven, whatever has been said to awake and detect you notwithstanding?

O *brethren*! what do ye design to do? will ye live contentedly in such a state, in which ye cannot see *God's face* in mercy? Perhaps some may say, I design to turn to God afterwards. Ans. *Poor sinners*! this practice has a manifold evil in it: it's dishonourable to God, hurtful to others, and prejudicial to yourselves.

1. It is *dishonourable to God*, in three respects. And,

(1.) It contains in it bold *rebellion* against his *authority*, which enjoins you to turn speedily, even to day, *Psal.* xcv. 7, 8. *Heb.* iii. 7. *2 Cor.* vi. 2.

(2.) A prophane *contempt of his Majesty*: for by your delays, you prefer the devil, the world, and your lusts before him, by observing their commands first, and by giving them the prime of your strength and years; than which, what can be more abominable, base, and degenerate? what, to prefer the *vilest evil* before the *greatest good*! the *basest tyrant* before the *best* and most *beneficent master*!

(3.) *Cruel ingratitude* against his *mercy*; that instead of improving the morning of your time in the service of it's *author*, you should *abuse* it to his *dishonour*, in the service of his stated and implacable *enemy*. Miserable souls! is this the way you requite the good God for all the multiplied kindnesses he has vouchsafed upon you? And will ye thus *for-sake the fountain of living waters, and hunt after broken empty cisterns*? *Jer.* ii. 13. Is not ingratitude a most complicated and atrocious evil? a very

ry heathen could say, *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris*, If you name ingratitude, you mention all that is bad.

2. Your *delays* are *hurtful to others* : for what has a more pernicious insnaring influence than a bad example? By this you *induce* others to sin, *encourage* them and *harden* them in it, and thereby are like to bring them, and yourselves with them, to destruction, *Prov. ii. 18, 19. ----- xiii. 20.* Suppose you yourselves should be turned to God afterwards, (which is not probable) how could you *persuade* those you have *debauched* by your irreligious example, to *embrace* that piety, which they through your criminal influence, have an inveterate *prejudice* against. O ! if you had any love to the souls of others, and particularly of your own dear *relatives*, would ye thus conspire with the grand enemy of mankind, in procuring the damnation of those you profess an affection for ? But,

3. Your *delays* are peculiarly *prejudicial to your selves*, upon many accounts.

(1.) They are exceeding *perilous*, because of a threefold *uncertainty*.

(1. Of life. *Jam. iv. 13. for what is our life ? it is even a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* Therefore we should work while the day lasts, for the night cometh when no man can work.

(2. Of the means of grace, and seasons of salvation. Hence we are commanded to walk in the light, while we have the light.

(3. Of a blessing upon these means. Conversion is God's gift, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* which he confers in his own appointed time, not according to our pleasure, *2 Tim. ii. 26.* Therefore we should carefully improve every opportunity : for if we will not with earnestness perform the outward duties of religion while

while we *can*, it is just with God to leave us so that we shall not when we *would*. Again,

(2.) Every *delay* hardens the heart more and more; gradually introduces a sinful custom, and thereby renders conversion the more difficult, *Jer. xiii. 23.*

(3.) *Augments* the number and heinousness of your iniquities, and provokes the divine indignation; for one sin naturally leads to, and disposeth for another, *as deep calleth unto deep, Psal. xlii. 7. ----- xcv. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

(4.) Late *Repentance* is seldom true and genuine. There is but one example of this in the holy scriptures, *viz.* that of the thief upon the cross; neither can it be proved that this man deferred his repentance with that view or expectation, that he should obtain it at last. Read and consider that terrible scripture, *Matth. xxiv. 48, 49.*

(5.) A purpose of *deferring conversion* and repentance is inconsistent with a sincere purpose to repent, *1 Pet. iv. 3.*

(6.) To *delay* in matters of such moment is the most perfect *madness*. Would he not act like a distracted man who was bit with a poisonous serpent, or had drunk poison, or was mortally wounded, and yet would tarry some considerable time before he would send for a *surgeon*, take an *antidote*, or apply a *balsam*?

(7.) *Delays* are very contrary to the practice of God's people, *Psal. cxix. 60. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

(8.) But if we could be certain of obtaining a sound conversion at last, (which is not attainable, those that wilfully delay are then like to be forsaken, *Prov. i. 28.*) it would be base and disingenuous to treat the *Almighty* so as it is not lawful to treat any of our fellow creatures, *Prov. iii. 28.* and so as we would not have the *Almighty* to treat us, *Psal. cii.*

3. But to persuade you, if possible, to turn to God speedily, and seek converting grace, consider seriously,

1. That God the Father calls you, *Jer. xviii. 11.* Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Thus saith the Lord, Behold I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you : return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your way and your doings good. *Ezek. xxxiii. 11.* Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord, God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? I know not a more piercing and moving text in the whole scripture than this : O ! methinks it is enough to melt a rock, to make a heart of iron move. The *ingemination* or repetition of the the intreaty, *turn ye, turn ye*, and also the note of *obsecration*, O Israel ! is very expressive, (1.) Of the great weight of the matter spoken. (2.) Of the sincerity and earnestness of God's desire after the happiness of true penitents : for it seems by the context, that they questioned whether they should live, altho' they did repent and reform, *v. 10.* (3.) The *stupidity* and *obstinacy* of sinners, that want so many warnings, *why will ye die ? why will ye act so unreasonably and unaccountably*, as to be wilful procurers of your own eternal death? O ! will you not hear the groans and complaints of a God ?

2. The Lord Jesus calls thee, O unconverted sinner ! (1.) By declaring the *happiness* thou mayest attain by conversion, *Matth. v. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.* (2.) By expressing the danger thou art like to incur by the want of it, *John iii. 3, 5.* (3.) By offering the kindest encouragements to those convinced and distressed sinners, that *honestly, earnestly and perseveringly seek it, Matth. xi. 28. John vi. 37. John vii. 37.* In the

the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Rev. xxii. 17. ---- iii. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me. And, (4.) When ungrateful sinners will not comply with his reasonable, encouraging, heart-affecting and condescending invitations, then does the holy Jesus take a mournful complaint, and bewail over their obstinacy against him, and cruelty to their own souls, John v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life ! O sinner ! hast thou a heart hard enough to withstand an intreating, woeing, dying Saviour ?* consider his sovereignty and self-sufficiency, that his happiness cannot admit of increase or decay, that it is equally incapable of addition or diminution, that thy goodness cannot extend to him, Psal. xvi. 2. and wonder at, and comply with, his surprizing condescension. I think Dr. Watts expresses this matter in one of his lyrick poems, with admirable beauty and energy of language, after the following manner :

“ Did ever pity stoop so low,
 “ Dress’d in divinity in blood ?
 “ Was ever rebel courted so,
 “ With groans of an expiring God ?

3. The holy Spirit, the third person of the adorable trinity, invites you to turn to God, by the good inclinations he stirs up in you, which if you continue to oppose, he will withdraw for ever, and strive no more with you, Gen. vi. 3. And also by his good word proposed to you, Rev. xxii. 17. *And the spirit, and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* And will ye be so cruel and barbarous as to resist, to your own damnation, the kind invitations and compassionate calls of the God that made you, the Saviour that bought you, and the Holy Ghost who offers to sanctify you ?

4. Does

4. Does not the *word* of God in all it's branches, whether of *terror* or *comfort*, *alarm* or *invite* you to *turn* from *sin* to *God*? and will you withstand all the *allurements* of the mildest *lenity* and *pity*, and all the *arguments* of the most awful *majesty*, and just *severity*? have ye no *ingenuity*, and are ye lost to *fear*? what then can be done with you?

5. Does not the *providence* of God loudly *call* you to seek *regenerating grace*? should not God's *mercies* lead you to *repentance*? Rom. ii. and his *judgments* upon yourselves and others, *deter* you from *sin*, which produces such bitter effects even in this life, which are but a small presage of what must be endured in the next, unless repentance prevent: and especially when you hear of any being removed by death, O! you have reason to tremble and quake, as not knowing but you shall be the next, and yet are so unprepared for it. Are ye so deaf and obstinate, that ye will not hear the terrible trumpet of God's judgments? Joel ii. 1. *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble-----*

6. Do not the faithful *ministers* of God *call* you again and again, with utmost earnestness, to *turn* to *God*, as they are commanded, *Isai. lviii. 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Cor. v. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* And what abundant satisfaction would your sincere conversion yield to their oppressed burdened heart? and will ye have no compassion either upon them, who *travail in birth* for you, till *Christ be formed in you*, or upon your own *souls*? are ye resolved upon your own destruction? why will ye die, poor sinners?

7. Do not your own *consciences*, those *harbingers* of
of

of God in your bosoms, *call* you and urge you to *turn*, and tell you that it is now high time; that ye have served sin and satan too long already? do they not represent to you a dismal *map* of those *miseries* you shall quickly feel if ye turn not? and will ye be deaf to the warnings of your own minds? don't you know that if your heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart and knows all things? 1 *John* iii.

20. Will not your holding and strangling the truth in unrighteousness, prepare matter for the most *painful*, *tormenting* and *never-ending reflexions* in the *other world*, when conscience, however *muzzled* now, shall have full liberty to speak? won't it *prey*, like an old *vulture*, upon your *heart-strings* then, think you?

8. Does not your *reason* call you to *turn* from *sin* to *Jehovah*, by shewing you the necessity and equity of this change? *viz.* That it is not reasonable to expect the favourable *smiles*, and uninterrupted *enjoyment* of a righteous holy God, without likeness to him; and that it is but equal you should improve the powers you have received from God in his service, and make some grateful returns for his unmerited kindness.

9. Does not the *happiness* of *heaven* invite you to *seek converting grace*, without which ye cannot be a partaker of it? and are you *willing*, miserable souls! to be for ever *separated* from the *light* and *love*, the *joys* and *triumphs* of that blessed state?

10. Should not the *torments* of *hell* alarm you to *flee* from that *place* of *perfect* and *miserable misery*, which you cannot escape without converting grace? The damned in hell while they lived here, were careless of their salvation: how deplorable, alas, is their condition now! O what would they give for the like opportunities, they have had and neglected? was not this the complaint of *Dives*? he wanted some body to go and tell his brethren, that they might

might not come into that place of torment. Luke xvi. 23, 24, 27, 28. hear how damned *Dives* roars and groans: *In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. I pray thee therefore, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

11. May not the necessity of this change excite you to seek after it? Ye can neither behold God here by an eye of faith, or enjoy him hereafter without it, *Matth. v. 8. John iii. 3, 5.* So that it is absolutely necessary; you may live a contented happy life, without much riches, or great honours, but you can't taste of true *happiness* without *holiness*, *Heb. xii. 14.* This is the one thing necessary, which whosoever chooseth, possesseth not only the best, but the most necessary part; the Lord Jesus contemns the care of many things before this, *Luke x. 41.*

12. The excellency of it: for as much as it restores the *defaced image* of God in us (which is the *beauty* of our nature) to some degree of it's primitive *lustre*, and thereby capacitates us to answer the *design* of our *being*, which is to *serve* and *enjoy* our *creator* and *redeemer*; without this, we must be *unprofitable* here, and *miserable* hereafter.

13. The *profitableness* of it.

(1.) Does it not advance us unto the highest *honours*? *1 Sam. ii. 30. Rev. i. 5, 6.* For thereby *Jehovah*, who is the fountain of *honour*, becomes our *father*, the Lord Jesus our *husband*, angels our *guards* and attendants, and the *triumphant* and *militant church* our *brethren*. Is it a matter of no moment for poor polluted dust, heirs of hell and wrath, to be cleansed from their deformity, and made the sons of

a king, nay, to be made *kings* and *priests* to God? does not the apostle *John* speak with surprize and admiration concerning this privilege? 1 *John* iii.

1. Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!

(2.) Does not conversion instate us in the purest pleasures, even such as result from the embraces of a God of infinite excellency, beauty and glory?

(3.) Does it not intitle us to the most lasting benefits, the peculiar favour and friendship of an omnipotent, omnipresent, beneficent and everlasting God, which can't expire, (because of the invariableness of his nature and covenant) so long as God lives? does not this intitle to a kingdom that hath foundations perfectly freed from those variations and vicissitudes, to which every thing sublunary is exposed, to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God? *John* iii. 3.

14. The reasonableness of it : is it not highly rational to secure an infinite good, *Col.* i. 12. and to guard against an infinite evil, both of sin and punishment, to preserve a pure peace-speaking conscience, and please that sovereign majesty, from whose good pleasure our beings and all the blessings we possess or expect, proceed; upon whose power and providence, we have our continued dependance? now without converting grace we cannot obtain those privileges, as has been before proved : wherefore then, O sinner, dost thou not importunately cry to God for, and earnestly labour after this change?

15. The freeness of it : is not the life of the converted, the freest life? *John* viii. 36. If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Regenerate persons are made free from their natural bondage to sin, satan, death, the law of God as a covenant of works, and the curses threatned for the breach of that covenant. But sinner, while thou

art without the *new birth*, thou art a miserable captive to all these, *John* viii. 34. 2 *Tim.* ii. 26. *Gal.* iv. 25. *Heb.* ii. 15. *John* iii. 36. What! art thou contented with this woful captivity to the worst of tyrants? art thou contented to be stript of all thy original raiment, and clothed with basest rags, confined in the darkeſt dungeon, imprifoned in the pit wherein is no water, ſtarved for want of bread, wounded and left half dead; chained with maſſy and unwieldy fetters: this is *really* the *rueful ſtate* of every unconverted finner, *Iſai.* lxiv. 6. *Zech.* ix. 11. *Col.* i. 13. *Pſal.* xl. 2. ---- xxxviii. 5. *Iſai.* xlv. 20. --- lv. 2. *Luke* x. 30. *Acts* viii. 23. And now when the *morning of mercy dawns*, when the *dove of heaven deſcends* after the fatal *ſhipwreck* of our firſt parents *apoſtacy*, with a peaceful *olive* in his *bill*, and life and immortality is brought to light; when *Zion's King* iſſues out royal proclamations of *pardon*, and the ſilver *trumpet* of the peaceful *gospel* ſweetly ſounds a joyful *jubilee*, proclaims *liberty, liberty* to the forlorn captives, a valuable, coſtly and everlaſting *liberty*, 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. when the bleſſed *Lord Jeſus* offers to open the priſon doors, and ſet the captive free from his chains, darkneſs, penury and death, and to *heal* him with his *wounds*, and *clothe* him with his *righteouſneſs*: won't you accept of this free and invaluable precious offer? what, not accept of *liberty and life*? Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid! doſt thou ſtickle at the acceptance of ſuch an offer? why then, wretch, thou deſerveſt to be damned, that thou mayeſt *feel* the *fruits* of thy abhorred obſtinacy! and damned thou ſhalt be, as certainly as *Chriſt* is *true*, except thou *repent*, *John* viii. 24. Such ſelf-traytors deſerve no pity, neither from God nor man.

16. The *ſafety* of it: the converted perſon has God to be his ſhield and ſanctuary, his ſure refuge, and

and exceeding great reward, *Psal.* xviii. 1. *Isai.* xxxii. 2. *Gen* xv. 1. And who then can hurt them, or make them afraid? *Rom.* viii. 28. *Psal.* xxiii. 4. ---- xliii. 1. ---- xlvi. 2, 3. How secure and pleasant must the repose of such persons be? *Psal.* iii. 5, 6. But before his *change*, you are in danger of utter destruction every minute, and have no shelter to cover you from the vengeance of an angry God; why then, poor sinners, will ye not turn to God, and seek converting grace?

17. The *sweetness* and *pleasure* of it: as the regenerate persons life is the *safest*, so it is the *sweetest* life, *Prov.* iii. 17. *Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light. His commandments are not grievous*, *Matth.* xi. 30. 1 *John* v. 3. It is true, there is no small difficulty and pain that convinced persons are exposed to, before the *bias* of the heart is turned towards God, and new qualities infused into the soul; but when a person has got his heart *changed*, the power of sin *broken*, and a sense of God's *love*; then the yoke of Christ is easy, he goes on in his way rejoicing, *Acts* v. 41. Now their joys have these remarkable properties.

(1.) They are *rational* and *solid*, confirmed by and arising from consideration and reflexion, and therefore *suitable* to the *soul*, which is the *seat* and fountain of our *reason*. Whereas, the pleasures of sin are but a *flash*, the *result* of a cruel *rape* upon the *understanding* by *sense*, which according to the order of God and nature, should be it's subject.

(2.) *Spiritual*, proceeding from the Father of spirits, and so adapted to the soul, which is of a spiritual and immaterial *nature*; but the pleasures of sin are *gross* and *sensual*, only suitable for the gratifications of the lower *passions* and *appetites*, which beasts possess in common with men.

(3.) *Peaceful*, Prov. iii. 17. they introduce a pleasing *calm* into the soul, Gal. vi. 16. whereas the pleasures of sin must needs produce *pain* and *disorder*, Isai. xlviii. 22. Heb. xii. 15.

(4.) *Perpetual*; either in feed or fruit, state or frame, habit or act, P^{sal}. cxix. 165. whereas the stolen pleasures of sin can't be reflected upon, without *shame* and *horror*, unless by men of *reprobate minds*, and *seared consciences*, Rom. vi. 21.

18. Do not *all things in nature bend* to their own good? The very irrational animals by a natural instinct, seek after their own safety and welfare, the sick dog will seek after a purgative *herb* to cure himself, the swallow after *celandine* to cure her blind young ones, the wounded hart after *dittany* to heal her: but alas! few poor sinners repair to *Christ* the great *physician*, for *eye-salve* to cure their *blindness*, Rev. iii. 18. Few hasten in earnest to the *branch* that sprung out of the *stem* of *Jesse*, in order to get a *leaf* from that *tree of life* to *heal* them; and one great reason is, because they feel not their *sickness* and sores, Matth. ix. 12. O might not this care of those poor creatures, who are destitute of the direction of reason, after their own safety, excite you who are blessed with that faculty they want, to hasten to *Christ*, with the most earnest solicitations for *converting grace*, without which you must die in your wounds.

19. May not the common *care of mankind*, about things of infinitely the lesser *weight*, excite you? What pains does the merchant, the mariner take, to increase his stock? does he not spread his canvas wings, and fly a-cross the broad and boisterous deep, to the extremities of the earth, amidst a vast vicissitude of dangers, difficulties, and death? does he not willingly endure the scorching summer *heats*, and the cold winter *gusts*? sleep departs from his
eyes,

eyes, through the excess and anxiety of his fears and cares, and all this to gain or secure a little perishing self. Do not farmers and tradesmen take much the same pains, for the most part they rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, under inexpressible fatigue, and all to secure a little transient and unsatisfying gain ; now will ye not be persuaded to take as much pains about your souls, (in seeking of, and labouring for *converting grace*) as the generality of men take about their *bodies* and *estates*, about an *eternal*, as they about a *temporal* and *transient good* ? will ye not ? will ye not ? unhappy finners ! O how astonishing is your *madness* ! *Holy and blessed God, enlighten the minds and change the hearts* of these poor finners, and turn them from vanity to thyself.

20. May not the *care* of those who are *without* the communion of the visible church about their *salvation* and *happiness*, *alarm* and *excite* you to seek after a *renovation* ? How diligent are the *Mahometans*, who pray no less than five times every day *steadily* ? How famous for morality were some of the *Pagans*, as particularly, *Seneca, Cato, Socrates* ? What did not the *Pharisees* do, whose fame was commended before others ? some historians relate of them, that they wore thorns in the borders of their garments, that when they sat down, by the pricking of these they might be remembered of the law ; as also that they used to wear hats with very deep brims, to prevent their being ensnared by tempting objects, through the *windows* of the senses ; and that even in their beds, they were wont to hold a bullet in their hand, under which by the bed-side was placed a brass bowl, that when they begun to sleep, the bullet falling out of their hand into the bowl, might by it's report, awake them to prayer ; and yet the *Lord Jesus* assures us, *That unless our*

righteousness exceed theirs, we shall in no ways enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. v. 20. Wherefore that is not only necessary to be done, which they did justly, but more, otherwise won't the *Lord Jesus* tell us, *Do not the Publicans so?* And these were not altogether negligent, *Matth. v. 46, 47.*

In brief, every creature contained within the spacious verge of the whole creation, whether in the visible heavens, the earth or sea, may excite you; if you look upon the sun, moon and stars, these obey their Creator, while you insolently controul his authority. If you view the trees and plants upon the earth, or fishes in the great ocean, those bring forth their fruits in their kind, and attain the end of their creation, while you are barren and live in a continued opposition to the grand design of your being. May not every pile of grass, or flower, or fruit you behold, be an awakening monitor to you?

Once more consider, I earnestly beseech you, as upon my bended knees, the few following motives.

1. That *heaven* is the soul's center; (for which conversion is a necessary preparative) behold! how every thing in the great machine of the world inclines to it's center; see how the rivers in the mazy wanderings, run with speed to the great ocean, that fountain and original of waters; how swiftly do the sparks fly upwards to their rest, with what vehemency do ponderous bodies descend downwards to the earth! Then may the sinner say, is heaven thy center, O my soul! and shall these inanimate things exceed thee in their motion? shall every thing hasten to it's resting place but thee? was it not the speech of *Naomi* to her daughter-in-law the *Moabitess*? *Ruth iii. 1.* Might we not say this to our poor souls? Shall I not seek rest for thee, O my soul, under the wings of Christ, in the bosom of God, by imploring of, and labouring for converting grace?

2. Con-

2. Consider, it is *your own concern* : perhaps one would be slack about *another's business*, who would not be so about his *own* ; now this is your own business, dear *brethren* ? whatever you get here, goes into your own *treasury* ; here if you are wise, you are wise for yourselves, but if you scorn advice, and instruction, you alone shall bear it, *Prov. ix. 12.*

3. An *eternal concern*. Conversion entitles to, and fits for a kingdom which is not shaken, a crown which fadeth not away, *1 Cor. ix. 25.* Are not worldly things valued according to their duration and permanency, and why should not this ? in comparison of which, they are but *fleeting shadows which have no abiding*, *Eccles. vi. 12. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 31.* What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, he would make but a poor bargain, *Matth. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 36, 37.* How much more, when men profanely sell their souls for a very inconsiderable part of it ?

4. Would it not be your greatest *wisdom* ? are not those called wise by the God of wisdom, who consider their latter end ? *Deut. xxxii. 29.* And can that be considered to purpose, without labour after conversion to God ? no surely, *Psal. cxix. 59, 60.* Does not the want of this wisdom make men like to *beasts*, nay worse than they ? *Psal. xlix. 20.* for is it not worse to be like a beast, than to be one ? Is it not a fool's property to want a heart, when he has a price to get wisdom ? *Prov. xvii. 16.*

5. Will not *salvation* fully recompence all your pains ? Certainly there is enough in the heavenly *paradise*, to make amends for all the labours, services and sufferings of the people of God here on earth ; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, (to conceive) things which God hath prepared for them that love

him, 1 Cor. li. ix. There, their *prayers* will be turned into *praises*, their *sighs* into *songs*, their tears into *triumphs*, their *sorrow* into *joy*, their *cross* into a *crown*, their *reproaches* into *pearls*, their *labour* into *rest*, their *darkness* to *light*, their *death* to *life* and *love*, Rev. v. 9. ---- xiv. 3. ---- xv. 3. 1 Pet. i. 8. Heb. iv. 9. Rev. xxi. 4, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23. ---- xxii. 1, 2. Has the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, which God hath promised to those that love and prepare for his appearance, 2 Tim. iv. 8. James i. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. no influence on the sinner? Hast thou no desire after that place of pure, consummate and everlasting delight, where neither sighing nor sorrow have any access or residence? Rev. xxi. 4. Why then, thou art worse than *Balaam* the conjurer, Numb. xxiii. 10. If you have, then seek *converting grace*, else your desires are like to be as vain as his. Prov. xiii. 4. Pray *observe*, that tho' nothing can *recompence* for the neglect, and *loss* of our *salvation*, yet *salvation* will recompence for the *neglect* and *loss* of all other things, Matth. xvi. 26. Is it not better to be scoffed at for being too *strict* and *speedy* in travelling upon *Zion's* road, than to be damned for being too *loose* and *slow*?

6. Won't your sinful sloth (against the light of your own minds) in seeking *regenerating grace*, aggravate your punishments in hell? Luke x. 12, 13, 15. *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah* --- Luke xv. 22. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.*

7. Is there not *encouragement* for earnest *seekers*, for true *penitents*? Matth. xi. 12. *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Let the convinced, distressed sinner read the following scriptures, John vi. 37. --- vii. 37. Rev. iii. 20. *Isai. i.*

x8. --- lxv. 24. *Luke* vii. 37----48. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11, 12, 13. That expression of God's astonishing affection, recorded in the parable of the prodigal, *Luke* xv. is enough I think to invite the most obstinate sinner to turn to God. No sooner did the poor prodigal begin to turn to his father, but immediately his father spied him a great way off, his bowels were moved with compassion towards him, and he hastened to his relief, *ver.* 20. Mr. *Henry*, I think, glosseth excellently upon this verse. “ (1.) “ *Saith he*, Here were eyes of mercy, and these very “ quick-sighted ; *when he was yet a great way off*, “ *his father saw him* --- He looketh on men when “ they are gone astray from him, to see whether “ they will return to him, and he is aware of their “ first inclination towards him. (2.) Here were “ bowels of mercy, and those bowels turning with- “ in him, and yearning at the sight of his son, *he* “ *had compassion*. Misery is the object of pity, e- “ ven the misery of a sinner, though he has brought “ it upon himself, yet God compassionates him, “ *Hos.* xii. 8. (3.) Here were feet of mercy, and “ these quick-paced ; *he runs*, this notes how swift “ God is to shew mercy. The prodigal came flow- “ ly, under a burden of shame and fear, but the “ tender father runs to meet him with his encour- “ ragements. (4.) Here were arms of mercy, and “ these arms stretched out to embrace him ; *he* “ *fell on his neck*, though guilty, and deserving to “ be beaten, though dirty, and newly come from “ feeding swine, --- yet thus he takes him in his “ arms, and lays him in his bosom. Thus dear are “ all true penitents to God, thus welcome to the “ Lord Jesus. (5.) Here are lips of mercy, and “ those lips dropping as the honey-comb, *he kis-* “ *sed him*. This kiss not only assured him of his “ welcome, but sealed his pardon. ” Not a word

of his former miscarriages is mentioned against him, but on the contrary he is caressed with the highest honours, treated with the most compassionate respects, by his indulgent father ; he came home between hope and fear, fear of being rejected, and hope of being received ; but his father was not only better to him than his fears, but better than his hopes, for he was clothed with the best robe, the righteousness of Christ, had a ring put on his hand, had the earnest of the spirit given him, and was thereby sealed to the day of redemption ; and shoes upon his feet, was endowed with the preparation of the gospel, Eph vi. 13. a holy resolution to follow Christ through all difficulties. Now brethren, is not this a powerful and persuasive motive ? methinks the unconverted sinner should reason thus with himself : And is the holy and blessed God whom I have so cruelly offended, and whose authority I have slighted, whose law I have broken, and whose love I have abused, making suit to me for that allegiance I owe to his majesty, upon the performance of which my life depends ? Has the just and righteous God bore with me so long, when I was ripe for the sickle of his justice, Joel iii. 13. and plead with me so often to fly from my own death and ruin ? and now after so many affronts and refusals, he is yet waiting to be gracious to me, and wanting to be exalted, that he may have mercy upon me, Isai. xxx. 18. What, the sovereign, the offended majesty of heaven in whose presence the brightest seraphim veils his face with his wings, as being conscious of his comparative deformity, the God to whom it is a condescending stoop to behold the things that are done in heaven, Psal. cxiii. 6. wait upon a rebel worm ! Rev. iii. 20. Is the blessed God willing to be reconciled to me, after so many horrible and grievous provocations, willing to wash my crimson sins, and make them white

❖ *snow*, Isai. i. 18. willing to embrace me (*vile monster*!) in the bosom of his unmerited love and peculiar affection! is it possible? is it possible? O *strange*! O *wonderful*! and shall I? can I? dare I withstand such love any longer? God forbid! God forbid! *Lord*, my heart earns after thee, for I see *thou art a gracious God*, Jonah iv. 2. Turn me, turn me, most *holy Jehovah*, *unbare thine arm*, and *draw me unto thee*, for now Lord I am weary with sinning against thee; now I want to fear and serve thee, I am grieved at the heart, O God! that I have served thine enemies so long; away ye wretched tyrants, be gone, for I hate you all! now, *Lord*, let me come to thee, as a poor hunger-starved prodigal; *I confess I have sinned against heaven and against earth, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants*, Luke xv. 18, 19. O pity! pity me, blessed God, who would fain fly under thy wing for succour! *Is there not mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4. Hast thou not been found of those that sought thee not? Lord, wilt thou not be found of me, wretched me, who wants to seek thee, and to abandon all other lords and lovers besides thee? *Blessed Jesus*, I have been long lost, and wandering from God, in the *desarts* of sin, and dead in trespasses: O thou almighty *shepherd*! bring me, a poor stray sheep, by thy word and spirit, to thy *fold*; *lay me on thy shoulder, or in thy bosom*, Luke xv. 4, 5. Isai. xl. 11. O let me, the poor lost sheep, be found, that the dead may live, Luke xv. 24.

8. Thy *conversion*, sinner, would occasion joy in heaven, and upon earth; the holy God, and holy angels, and holy men, would rejoice at it, Luke xv. 10, 24. and your own soul among the rest, would *sout* with joy and triumph, Acts viii. 39. None but wicked men and devils would be disturbed on that occasion,

occasion, and if that will disturb them, God grant they may soon be disturbed. Let all hell rage, and foam, let all the devil's *imps* growl or sniker, they cannot hurt thee, if thou come over to Jesus; come then, poor sinner! come: what hinders thee? O *almighty Father!* pity and persuade those poor stupid sinners to come from darkness and death to thee.

9. What would you loose by turning to God? is it dishonourable to be related to the divine *majesty*, to the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, that august assembly of *perfected spirits*, and to Jesus the angel and mediator of the *everlasting covenant*? Heb. xii. 23, 24. Is it dishonourable to be adorned with the *beauties* of holiness, from the *womb* of the morning, Psal. cx. 3. to be conformed to a God of radiant, transcendent, and inexpressibly glorious *excellency*? Exod. xv. 11. Is it uncomfortable to partake of the *clusters* of Canaan, the joyful soul-ravishing *earnests* of all the *sweets* above? 1 Pet. i. 8. Can it be uncomfortable to entertain *communion* with a God of infinite *beauty*, infinite *goodness*, infinite *glory*, *excellency* and all-sufficiency, the fountain of *power* and *love*, Cant. i. 13. --- ii. 1, 3. --- v. 10---16. Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. Gen. xvii. 1. Isai. xlii. 8. Psal. xvi. 11. Is it disadvantageous to be entitled to an unalienable and everlasting inheritance, extending infinitely beyond the narrow *circle* of created matter, to be enriched with a *pearl* of immense worth, more valuable than if the vast *volumes* of the *heavens*, and spacious *globe* of the *earth* were turned into a *mass* of *solid gold*? Is it disadvantageous to be clothed with the chiefest *robe* in heaven's *wardrobe*? to have a *house* perfectly freed from all the *decays* of *time*, and *wrecks* of *matter*, built by God himself? to have *treasures* that *neither moth nor rust* doth corrupt, nor *thieves* break through, and steal? Lam. iii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 4. Matth. xiii.

xiii. 46. --- vi. 20. *Rev.* iii. 18. 2 *Cor.* v. 1. Is it a loss to enjoy the friendship and protection of a God of infinite *power* and almightiness, before whom all the *armies* of heaven, and earth and hell, are *as the small dust of the balance*? *Isai.* xl. 15. *Gen.* xvii. 1. Is it a loss to forsake that (*viz.* sin) which is the greatest dishonour of your *nature*, and the most malignant poison to your souls? --- can that be done too soon, which unless it be done, you are undone for ever? I mean turning to God by a sound conversion, *John* iii. 3. What hinders your compliance, O sinner, with the invitations of *heaven*? you will say perhaps, that sin is *pleasant*: *Answ.* It is true, some sins do please the senses, but it is as true, that their fruits here and in hell are *bitter*, *Prov.* xxiii. 31, 32. And are there not more safe rational and satisfactory *pleasures* to be had in serving the most high God, and seeking the salvation of your poor souls? *Psal.* iv. 6, 7. ---- xxiii. 4. ---- xlv. 23. *Matth.* xi. 40. 1 *John* v. 3. *Prov.* iii. 17. Don't say that you shall be reflected upon among your neighbours if you turn religious: if so, what then, those reproaches would reflect honour upon you, for whatever you think, it is no small honour and privilege, to suffer for God and his precious truths, *Phil.* i. 29. *James* i. 2, 3. *Matth.* v. 10, 11, 12. And if once you obtained converting grace, you would no more value the unjust reflexions of wicked people, than the *dust* under your feet. Don't say that you would lose some worldly advantage by the profession and practice of *religion*: if you did, it would be infinitely more than made up, in the love and favour of God here and hereafter. Why then don't you labour, poor sinners, to turn to God? why will you prefer any temporal enjoyment before the safety of your souls? Did it not argue a vile temper in *Esau*, to prefer a morsel of bread before

fore his *birth-right*, which are both sacred and civil privileges? Alas! the world and its enjoyments are to you as *Jael's milk* to *Sisera*, as *Delilah* to *Samson*; is it not a pity, that men should be such enemies to themselves, as to prefer the disguised *vani- ties* of a fading world to the real and eternal *rich- es* of another, and a better? Poor finners, when you seek for *rest* in temporal enjoyments, you seek for the *living* among the dead, your laboured pursuit is as vain, as if *Israel* had endeavoured to fix his *abode* in the wilderness, among serpents and enemies; or as if *Noah* had made the ark his home, when the waters were fallen, *Why stand ye here* (viz. in the market-place) *all the day idle?* Matth. xx. 6. Have ye no *work* to do for the immortal God, and your death- less *souls*? Why stand ye so indolent upon the *shore* of a vast *eternity*, not knowing but the next *tide* will sweep you off beyond all hopes of a *remedy*, and sink you in the dark *retreats* of death. Speak therefore in the language of the poor starving lepers, who sat at the gate of *Samaria*, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. *Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now come therefore, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.* If we return to a course of sin we shall surely perish, *Heb. xii. 14.* if we abide in our present *sloth* and security, we shall pine away and *perish* for want of *bread*; if we stay here we must starve to *death*, as sure as *God lives*, Luke xv. 17. if we go to God for converting grace and pardon- ing mercy, he can but deny us, we can but *perish*, but if he saves us alive (has mercy upon us) we shall live; live spiritually, comfortably and eternally. Up then sinners, *awake*, arise and *hasten, hasten, ba- sten* to Christ for *life*, for *bread*, for *mercy*: behold,
God's

God's stores are open, the treasures, magazine and wardrobe of heaven is unlocked, *Isai.* lv. 1, 2, 3. *Rev.* xxii. 17. *Zech.* xiii. 1. and Christ carries the keys, *Rev.* iii. 7. Apply to the Lord Jesus with the utmost speed, and most intense vehemence ! may be you will meet with more agreeable and satisfactory, and unexpected entertainment, as the poor lepers, *Luke* xv. 20-----25. You must resolve with *Esther*, to venture into the king's presence, *Esther* iv. 16. And so I will go in unto the king, and if I perish, I perish. She was resolved to interceed for her people's safety, though it should cost her her life ; and should not you much more for the eternal safety of your souls ; she met with a favourable reception from an imperious man, which banished her fears, and encouraged her hopes ; he held out the golden scepter which she touched, and offered to answer her request, to the half of his kingdom, *Esth.* v. 2, 3. And why may not the convinced sinner much more expect to find a gracious answer from a good God, whose being is love, and who delights in mercy, 1 *John* iv. 8. *Micah* vii. 18. Seeing he is now enthroned on compassion, and holds forth (under the gospel) the golden scepter of pardon, peace and pity, *Isai.* lxi. 1. *Heb.* iv. 16. *Luke* ii. 14. Hence is there not encouragement that the returning distressed prodigal may be enabled by God, to touch the scepter by the hand of faith that he may live ?

Well finners, are ye become gospel-proof, got beyond bow-shot, past all feeling ? that when we represent God's majesty armed with vengeance, seated on his dreadful throne of justice, wreathed with flames and lightnings, circled with clouds of gloomy horrors, encompassed with miriads of holy angels, casting with his unbear'd and unbroken arm thunderbolts of death, or shooting the barb'd pointed terrible arrows of his inflamed indignation, and with the other holding

holding a two-edged bright burnished glittering sword, ready to be thrust into your *hearts*, into the innermost *recesses* of your unarmed *souls*, and yet ye are not moved.

Or on the other hand, when we represent *Jehovah* seated on a *throne* of love, holding forth the *scepter* of *salvation*, and with the mildest *grace* and most earnest *importunity*, inviting, inducing, indearing condescension, *courting* worthless *rebels*, *captives*, *beggars*, to accept of refined *gold*, *liberty* and *life*, and that not only with the strongest *arguments*, but with *tears*, *groans* and *blood*, and yet you are not affected ; O astonishing stupidity ! O rock ! O adamant ! what *measures* would you have the great God take with you to reclaim you ? Good God ! what a wretched blindness and obduracy have men brought upon themselves by sin ? Be astonished ye *heavens*, and mourn, O *earth* ! O ye blessed *angels* of *God*, who *rejoiced* at the bringing of those glad tidings of *salvation* to a desolate world ! Here is *mourning* work for you, if ye were capable of it, to see the precious *offers* of this great *salvation* bought with *blood*, basely slighted and neglected : but ye are incapable of grief, being continually delighted with the bright *vision* of your *God*, you can't lament with us, or be partners in our pains.

O ye blessed *saints* of the triumphing *church* : be astonished at the unparallel'd *madness* of an infatuated world, in deceiving their precious souls, and slighting such a dear, transcendently excellent, and unspeakably glorious *redeemer*. The most of mankind will not, alas, they will not earnestly seek after converting grace ! can ye mourn with us, blessed souls ? no, ye are ignorant of our wo, *Isai.* lxiii. 16. and continually delighted and ravished with the *views* of your redeemer's *face*, and beauty : ye are always drinking the pure, sinless, soul-satisfying
sweets

sweets of his life-giving love. Ye are always swimming in a calm *ocean* of *pleasure*, and imbibing the *streams* of pure *nectar*, that spring from the *throne* of God, plucking *apples* from the *tree of life*, sitting under the shadow of God, the *King*, the *Lord* of *hosts*, breathing perpetual *triumphs*, and shouting continual *hosannahs*.

O but did you see the dismal *state* of things here, how wretchedly poor finners deceive themselves, with dreams and delusions, with false and foolish hopes of happiness, without the experience of regenerating grace, and in the mean time affront the God that made them, reject the *redeemer* that died for them, and grieve the blessed *spirit*, then surely if you had any *room* for sorrow, any *access* or *avenue* to grief, you would fill the heavens with *sobs*, groans and lamentations, instead of your present *songs* of *triumph*. But, blessed souls! your tears are for ever wiped away, those crystal *fountains* which run so fast in this wilderness, must now no more *gush* and *bleed*: no, they are for ever *shut* and *sealed*, and ye have more delightful work to do, in exalting of, and rejoicing in your *God* and *redeemer*! Who then, *Lord God* of *hosts*, shall *mourn* over a perishing, secure, deceived, unregenerate world? why is not the bright *pavement* of the great *King's* *abode*, the crystal *canopy* of the visible heavens darkened, to testify it's sorrow for a perishing, deceived world? O thou beautiful *eye* of heaven! whose benign beams create our days, and make all nature glad, why dost thou not forget to shine? why art thou not covered with a cloudy dress? why ceasest thou not to run thy wonted *rounds*, in order to lament the wretched perishing world? wilt thou still lend thy *light* to those who love to walk in *darkness*, to those who prophane-ly *abuse* thy *creatures* *goodness*? and thou blazing *moon*, with all the *ranks* of lesser *lights*, have ye no pity upon

upon your fellow creatures, who have *quenched* their once glorious *light* in *darkness*, and are hastening fast, through their *sloth* and *delusions*, to eternal *death*? why are ye not vailed to testify your grief?

O let all the lower *creation* mourn for man! sinning man has stained it's *beauty* and *glory*. But what do I say? my request is answered, the whole frame of *nature* being oppressed with the sin of man, *travails* and *groans*, *Rom. viii. 22*. Surely if inanimate creatures were capable of sense and sympathy, the *winds* would whisper perpetual *sighs* for, and the hard *rocks* would break their long silence, and *lament* over the cruel *ingratitude* which unconverted sinners are guilty of against God, and the stupid *barbarity*, which they exercise against their own souls; the great *ocean* and all gliding *rivulets* which love to sport in meandrine *circuits* round the *globe*, would weep their useless channels dry, in doleful *lamentations*, the pregnant *clouds* would spend all their watery *magazines* in *tears*, the blooming *trees* would lay down their *honours*, and be clothed with a winter mournful *garb*.

O ye *saints* of God! are your *bowels* of *brass* and *iron*, that they won't move? don't ye see the miserable state of the world? look how fast and thick they move (men of all ranks and orders) upon the *sable road*, fearless and unconcerned, to the *dark chambers* of *death* and *hell*. Very dear *brethren*! are not these miserably miserable creatures, objects of pity? may not your eye affect your heart? or have you forgot to pity? are the *fountains* of your sorrow congealed, and have ye no tears to shed upon this mournful *occasion*? God forbid! O let *rivers* of *water* run down your eyes, because men, unconverted men, keep not your *father's law*! but obstinately flight the infinite love of God, and thereby destroy their own souls.

And

And thou, my poor *soul*, *mourn, mourn, mourn!* *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!* that I might sufficiently bewail over these miserable finners, whom I can't persuade! let me, *Lord of hosts*, be clothed with sackcloth, and covered with ashes, that I may *mourn*. And now, high, holy and everlasting God, open the *springs* of my *sorrow*, and let them *bleed to death*. Burden my heart, most blessed God, with as great a weight of grief, as the frame of my nature can bear; because of those deceived sluggish souls, who will not quit their destructive delusions, their damning lusts, and turn to the living God. If I can do no more, good God! let me *mourn*; if I may not be indulged the undeserved privilege of persuading any, any poor sinner, to turn to thee, my God, then, *Lord Jesus*, let me lament with all my soul and heart, with a bitter and perpetual, but submissive mourning. Grieve, my distressed soul, and all ye my mourning *passions*, awake, awake, awake and float in an incessant *vein* of grieving *grief*!

But if any poor sinner should ask me, how he should seek this change? I answer more generally.

I.) *Early*, Eccl. xii. 1. Prefer nothing to this, let the first of thy time, thoughts and cares, be spent about it. When one asked the *Lord Jesus* leave to go and bury his father first, he denied it, and would have the first fruits offered to himself, *Matth.* viii. 21, 22. In *Bethesda*, the man that first went into the *pool*, was healed of whatever disease he had, *John* v. 4. The *Israelites* were obliged to offer their first *fruits* to God, and a curse is denounced against such as had in their *flock a male, and vowed a corrupt thing*, Mal. i. 14. Delay not a moment longer: don't you know the deceits of your enemies. "To day is cunningly stole away in hopes of
" to morrow, and when to morrow comes, an ill
" devil,

“ devil, (as *Basil* observes) would have that day for itself, and asks the other morrow for God,” and thus not a small number of unwary finners, are *told* to hell by the threads of their good *resolutions*.

2.) *Earnestly*; as the poor woman *for the lost piece of silver*, Luke xv. 18. And that,

[1.] Because the *good, conversion* entitles us to, is of *great moment*, and is not to be obtained by small diligence. It is a great salvation; now what will not a man do for the safety of his *body*? *Eye for eye, skin for skin, and whatsoever he hath*, Job ii. 4. How much more should he be ready to lay down all for the interest of his poor *soul*?

[2.] Because *Christ* himself could not purchase our *happiness* without great *labour* and agony. It cost *Jesus* mournful tears, bloody sweat, and mortal wounds: now seeing the *purchase* was so dear to *Christ*, can we think to get an *interest* in it (by *conversion*) without *pains*?

[3.] Because many powerful *enemies* endeavour to *detain* us in a sinful and secure *state*, which are to be fought with and overcome, which, how painful and difficult a work it is to perform, is best known by those that have experienced it. The enemies to be contended with are, these three, the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*, each of which is too strong for us without a supernatural assistance.

[4.] Without earnest *labour*, no man is converted or saved ordinarily. Hence we are commanded to *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, for we are informed *that the gate is strait and the way narrow, which leads to life, and that few find it*, Luke xiii. 24. Matth. vii. 13, 14. Three things in *Christ's* metaphor shew the necessity of *pains*, viz. The *gate*, the *way*, the *travellers*.

[1. The gate is *strait* and difficult, (regeneration is the *gate* by which we enter into the *way of life*)
upon

upon a twofold account. 1. It is hard to find. Therefore it is said in the words, *Few there be that find it.* Why? because it is above nature, and only revealed to some by God the Father, *John i. 13. Matth. xi. 25.* 2. It is hard to be entered into, for this is contrary to nature, against the natural bent and corrupt tendency of the heart, urges for that *circumcision made without hands, the putting off the body of sin and death, Col. ii. 11.*

[2. The way is narrow in a twofold respect. 1. In regard of *sin.* The King's road to the new *Jerusalem* is so narrow, that it will not hold a man and unmortified lust together, it justles out one or both. 2. In regard of *punishment*, it is ὁδὸς τιθλιμωμένη, an afflicted way, a way hedged about with thorns, but blessed be God, not hedged up, the gate is not only hard to find, and to pass through, like that narrow passage between two sharp rocks, *viz. Bozer and Seneh*, through which *Jonathan* and his armour-bearer went, in order to smite the *Philistines*, *1 Sam. xiv. 4.* which resemble *presumption* upon the one hand, and *despair* on the other, between which a true christian must travel. I say the gate is not only *strait*, but the way is *difficult*, and that not only in respect of the corruptions which must be subdued, but also of the afflictions which must be patiently and chearfully endured; hence it is said, that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 12.*

[3. The travellers in this narrow way are but few, and was it not so since the foundation of the earth? What became of all the antediluvian world, except eight persons? *1 Pet. iii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 5.* What became of the many thousands in the four cities of the plain, *Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Admah*? Does not the apostle *Jude* inform us, *verse 7. That they are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire?*

fire? Though the number of *Israel* be as the sand of the sea, yet mercy is extended but to a *remnant*, Rom. ix. 27. ---- xi. 5. *There is a remnant according to the election of grace*, Rom. xi. 7. *For many are called but few chosen*, Matth. xx. 14. But,

3.) Ye must seek converting grace *perseveringly*. Because many have perished who have made seemingly good beginnings, but continued not; they seemed to do something, and suffer something, but not enough; not *constantly*, therefore their endeavours proved *abortive*, Luke xiii. 24. *For many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* The young man in the gospel did many things well, but the world was glued to his heart, *Matth. xix. 22.* *Agrippa* was almost persuaded, and therefore but almost saved, *Acts xxvi. 28.* Observe what the eloquent apostle speaks to the *Galatians*, chap. iii. 4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?* A person starving with hunger would not be contented with bare asking for bread, unless he obtained what he asked; so *brethren*, for *Christ's* sake, be not satisfied with your praying for *regeneration*, except ye get what ye pray for. The woman that had lost the piece of silver, sought diligently till she found it, *Luke xv. 8.* Go thou and do likewise.

If you desire more particular *directions*, I refer you to those mentioned in the close of the first discourse, and shall only observe by the by, that men are more willing to *hear directions* than *perform* them, and more willing to perform them than quit *dependance* upon them.

But before I conclude, I shall crave leave to offer a word of advice to regenerate persons.

Dear *brethren* in *Christ Jesus*, be entreated,

(1.) To *acknowledge* the pure grace and goodness of God to you in your regeneration; which is,

1.) So *distinguishing*. May it not affect your hearts to consider that God has passed by so many thousands

thousands of better natural and acquired endowments, and revealed *himself* and his *son* to you? That prayer of *Jesus* methinks should dwell in your thoughts, *Matth. xi. 25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* And that of the apostle *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. i. 26----29. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

2.) So pure; springing intirely from his own good pleasure, *Matth. xi. 25. James i. 18. Of his own will begat he us. Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6. But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.) John i. 13. Who hath made you to differ from another, and what have ye that ye have not received? 1 Cor. iv. 7.*

3.) Precious, *Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Therefore,*

(2.) Bless and adore God for this inestimable benefit, he hath so freely conferred upon you, with all your soul and strength, *Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.*

(3.) Depend upon him as the sole original and fountain of your divine life, who works in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, *Phil. ii. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 4, 5, 6. Without it had been God's good pleasure, to awaken and convince you, ye had surely*

surely remained in the same deep sleep of carnal security, which the most of the world continue in ; and after ye were convinced of your lost state, could ye have come to, and complied with an offered Saviour, unless you had been drawn by and learned of the Father ? no surely : you who are acquainted with God and yourselves, know better than to think so foolishly, *John xv. 5. ---- vi. 44.*

(4.) *Strive after growth*, in the earnest use of appointed means, *2 Pet. iii. 18. But grow in grace, in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. ii. 2. As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, go on to perfection, Heb. vi. 1. Forgetting the things that are behind, press forwards towards the mark ; reaching forth unto these things which are before, Phil. iii. 13. 14.* It is a metaphor taken from such as run in a race, who lean forwards with their bodies from eager desire to get the end of the race. So you must forget what is past, in regard of resting upon it, and being contented with it, without further progress, and stir up yourselves to take hold on God, *Isai. lxiv. 7.* Now that ye may obtain growth,

i. Be thankful for past mercies, and make use of them as encouragements to faith in God, in the way of obedience. The people of *Israel*, when they were brought through the red-sea in safety, they praised God for the signal deliverance he had honoured them with, though they were then upon the borders of an howling wilderness, just agoing to encounter new difficulties. *David* made use of God's mercy to him, in delivering him from the mouth of the lion, and the paw of the bear ; thence he was encouraged to hope that that God who had been thus kind to him in times past, would now deliver him

him out of the hands of the uncircumcised *Philistine*.

O christian ! despise not the day of small things, *Zech. iv. 10. Job xv. 11.* I know that babes in *Jesus* are apt to be peevish and dejected, if they have not a comfortable sense of God's love : but this is their great sin and folly, for we must live by *faith*, and not by *sense*, *Hab. ii. 4. Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11. ----- ii. 20. Heb. x. 38. 2 Cor. v. 7.*

2. Be *humbled* for past sins, *Psal. xxxii. 5.* and endeavour to keep humble, if you want to grow : let who will strut, don't you do it, *Luke xiv. 11. Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.*

3. Be *watchful* lest you be taken by surprise, *Matth. xxiv. 42.* Go with *your loins girt, and your lamps burning*, and continue *waiting for the coming of the bridegroom.*

4. Be *prayerful* : be conscientious in the performance of secret prayer, *Matth. vi. 6.* Don't suffer yourselves to be hurried away from it by a vain repetition of the heads of prayer, but endeavour to be importunate and fervent, *Jam. v. 16. Rom. xii. 12.* Remember, the *incense was put upon burning coals*, *Lev. xvi. 12.*

5. Encourage *faith* in God through *Christ*, for that is a root-grace, and all the rest do indeed languish and flourish with it, as it ebbs and flows : therefore it is the butt of the devil's malice, that which he vehemently opposeth ; hence we are bid to *fight the good fight of faith*, *1 Tim. vi. 12.* Remember, I only speak to God's children now, who have scriptural evidences of a special work of God's Spirit in them : as for others, I would not have them believe what is not ; but experienced christians are commanded to *believe in the dark*, *Isai. l. 10.*

6. Try *meditation* upon God's *word* and *works*, both of *creation*, *redemption* and *providence* ; upon

the *perfections* of God's nature, the greatness of his love, your own *frailty*, and the strict account you must quickly make to God, *Psal.* lxiii. 6. ----- lxxvii. 12. ----- cxix. 15, 78. ----- xxiii. ----- xlviii. ----- cxlviii. 1 *Tim.* iv. 15. *Gen.* xxiv. 63. *Josh.* i. 8.

Avoid an over frequent *examination* of your state in the hours of darkness : I know you are prone to it, but it is very prejudicial, because you are then like to pass a wrong judgment : for how can objects be truly discovered in the dark ? It is not the proper time to judge of the quality of waters, when they are muddied : and a wrong judgment creates unnecessary pain, weakens your faith in God, and love to him, and hinders you in the other duties of religion. Wherefore it is much better for you, to strive to renew your *covenant* with God, by making a new and solemn *surrender* of yourselves to him and his service, and strive to be faithful in the performance of the other duties of *piety*, *Psal.* cxix. 6.

7. If there be any sin of *neglect* or *commission* that your conscience accuseth you about, regulate that matter, or expect no peace, 1 *John* iii. 20. 2 *Cor.* i. 12.

8. Use *fasting* upon special occasions, which is of great use, *Joel* ii. 12. ----- i. 14. 2 *Chron.* xx. 3. *Ezra* viii. 21. *Jer.* xxxvi. 9. *Jonah* iii. 5. *Zech.* viii. 19. *Neh.* ix. 1. *Matth.* vi. 16. ----- ix. 15. *Luke* v. 35. 2 *Cor.* vi. 5. *Acts* xv. 2, 3.

9. Endeavour to *exercise* the grace ye have received, for to him that hath, shall be given, *Matth.* xiii. 12. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, *Gal.* v. 25. *Rom.* viii. 1. Being drawn, run ye, *Cant.* i. 4. Your stony heart being removed, make you a new heart, and a new spirit, *Ezek.* xviii. 31. Thus saith the Lord God, Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from

from all your abominations, Ezek. 14. 6. Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24. And remember, that by regeneration ye are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that ye should walk in them, Eph. ii. 10. Don't say that you cannot stir up the gift that is in you, or endeavour to exercise your graces : you can endeavour, *Isai.* lxiv. 7. and if you do not, it is your own fault ; to say the contrary, would be to make men meer blocks and machines ; also it opens a door to sloth, and reflects dishonour upon God ; but to him that ordereth his conversation aright will be shewn the salvation of God, *Psal.* l. 23. But,

10. If ye are born of God, seek your father's honour, *Mal.* i. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if then I be a father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a master, where is my fear ? Ye should labour to honour God, (1.) By speaking well of him, *Cant.* v. 10-----16. (2.) By speaking boldly for him, as a child for a father, *Psal.* cxix. 46. (3.) By bringing forth fruits to him, *Phil.* i. 11. *John* xv. 8. not to yourselves, lest ye be found empty vines at last, *Hos.* x. i. (4.) By being grieved at the reproaches that are cast upon him, *Psal.* lxxix. i.

11. Seek your husband's interest. O ! let Zion lie near your heart, and engross a considerable part of your thoughts and cares, *Psal.* cxxxvii. 5, 6. Endeavour as instruments in God's hand, to convert sinners from the evil of their ways, by mild and seasonable reproofs, earnest intreaties, and pious examples, *Jam.* v. 20.

12. Remember, God expects more from you than others, *Gen.* xviii. 19. and well he may, for he has

given more to you. Remember that holiness is the design of your election, vocation, redemption, regeneration, and adoption, Eph. i. 4, 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 3. 1 John iii. 1, 3. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love ----- Eph. v. 1, 2. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report : if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do ; and the God of peace shall be with you. Amen. Amen.



Adoption

Adoption opened.

1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*



THE penman of this sacred epistle has been concluded by the universal suffrage of the antient churches, to be the apostle *John*; the amiable signatures of his divine and calm spirit breathes and glides through all it's golden veins.

There is some difference of opinion concerning the time wherein he wrote it; some ascribing it to an earlier, some to a later date: but the most reasonable conjecture is, that it was wrote a little before that awful catastrophe was brought on the *Jewish* church and state, which the Lord Jesus had frequently foretold should be the just and equal retribution of their infamous obstinacy. This conjecture is grounded on the apostle's speaking of the *last times* being at hand, which is generally understood to be the concluding periods of the *Jewish* state.

The general scope and main design of this sacred epistle was to confirm the *Parthian Jews*, to whom it was wrote, in all the main truths of christianity, both speculative and practical; particularly, in the belief of our Lord Jesus as being the promised *Messias*;

fias ; and also, in the necessity of internal and external holiness ; against the impregnated and impious efforts of apostate *quondam* professors, particularly the infamous *Gnosticks*, the pernicious brood of that grand impostor *Simon Magus*.

Hence this apostle takes occasion, in divers parts of this epistle, to excite christians to the exercise of mutual love, by a variety of pregnant and pungent arguments, as the necessary bulwarks to screen them from the strong and virulent arrests of infectious seducers. Love is the cement which unites strength, and is not *unita vis fortior* ? The want of this is the bane of society, and exposes them to the ravening depredations of common enemies. Surely there is a most cogent motive of love, in our text, both to God our mighty maker, and to man our fellow-creature: *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*

The apostle having in the foregoing chapter and last verse, mentioned that great and necessary qualification, *being born of God*, takes occasion in the beginning of this, to celebrate with wonder and divine transport, it's consequent privilege, *adoption*. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*

In the words are these *four* general heads.

I. A great and honourable gift bequeathed, *that we should be called the sons of God.*

II. The donor of this specified, *the Father.*

III. The donee, or persons upon whom this gift was bestowed and conferred, *upon us.*

IV. The fontal or impulsive cause of this mentioned.

Let us a little explain these particulars in the order proposed.

I. As to the first general head, *hath bestowed--that we should be called the sons of God.* Here are two things remarkable.

i. The

1. The privilege conferred.

2. The manner of conferring it.

1. The privilege conferred, *called the sons of God*,

ὅτι τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθώμεν; τέκνα ἀ τικλῶ, *pario*, & γινομαι, *nascor*. *Erasmus* and some others render the word τέκνα according to our translation; but *Theodore*, *Beza* and *Pasor* think it is of a larger extent, and signifies *offspring*, *proles*, *soboles*, a general word that imports offspring, or sons of every age, sex, degree; in which sense I rather take the word. κληθώμεν α καλῶ, *voco*: this word is not here inserted with any antiphrasis, contradiction to, or opposition of the thing spoken of, in reality. It is not an empty name, or vain title, no, no: but the blessed privilege itself is here asserted, together with this honourable badge and epithet, as it's necessary consequent or effect, by a metonymy of the consequent or antecedent, *Matth. xxi. 13.* compared with *Luke xix. 46.* κληθώμεν, *called*. This word excellently holds forth the nature and dignity of *adoption*, (1.) *The nature of it*, that it consisteth in a forensic declaration; and so is distinguished from natural sonship. (2.) *It's excellency and dignity*; that this precious privilege is not kept hid and latent, but declared and made manifest, not only in the mind of God, but in the conscience of believers. It eclipses the relative goodness of benefits, when we know them not.

2. The manner of conferring this benefit, *hath bestowed*, δίδωκεν, α δωκ', δωσω, δίδωμεν. There is no difficulty that I know of in the word: it shews with more than oriental splendor, the admirable freedom of God's bounty in our adoption, and cuts the sinews of merit. 'Tis a gift, no debt; we have neither wisdom nor dignity to procure so inestimable a benefit. But,

II. The second general head concerns the *author* or *donor* of this benefit, *the Father*, & πατήρ. A demonstrative article is prefixed, emphatically show-

ing the glorious dignity and matchless greatness of the sublime donor. *πάσκει α τρώ, pascō, quia pater pascit liberos, velut pastor pascit oves.* The whole trinity, doubtless, is intended by this ; for all those sacred persons act a part in this glorious work : but more particularly and expressly, the first person, God the Father, called so, not only for the eternal generation of his Son, *Psal. ii. 7.* but also for the adoption of his people, *John i. 12.* because from him the whole family in heaven and earth is named, *Eph. iii. 15.*

III. The third head concerns the *donee* or *persons upon whom this privilege is bestowed*, *ἡμιν, upon us.* Not upon all and singular, not upon any one, or every one, but *upon us*, believers exclusively, who have been effectually called, converted from sin, and united to Jesus, in which is the foundation of adoption.

IV. The fourth general head, the *fontal* or *impulsive cause, love*, called in the original *ἀγαπῶ*, either *ab αἰῶνος ὡς ἐν, multum facere*, doing much, because it is effectual and operative ; *vel ab αἰῶνος κατὰ πᾶν, because love moves itself every way toward it's beloved object ; vel ab ἀγαπᾶν παυσιδῆαι, because the lover rests in the object he loves ; or ab ἀγαπᾶν πᾶν, to love much : and thus it is eminently in the cause before us.* Had not the blessed Lord loved much, would he ever have taken a finning creature into so near a relation to himself, as to have the privilege not only of being the servants of God, which is a great honour, but the friends of God, as was *Abraham*, which is much more ? but to be the sons and children of God is, doubtless, the flower of mercy, the crown and garland of divine love : so that love here surely signifies a vehement affection to the beloved ; not only a generous purpose of doing good, but the actual completion of it.

Now the love of God is, in general, twofold, *immanent and transient.*

I. God's

1. God's *immanent love* is that perfect property of God, whereby he is inclined to love *himself*. This affection is terminated on no creature, and is nothing else but God's pure and perfect essence. This is not the love specified in our text.

2. God's *transient love* is that property or attribute of God, whereby he is inclined to love *his creatures*, according to the good pleasure of his will. And this love is threefold, *viz.* of benevolence, beneficence, and complacence.

(1.) The love of *benevolence* is God's good purpose, *before time*, of doing his people good *in time*, Eph. i. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.* Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

(2.) God's love of *beneficence* is his actual doing of them good *in time*, according to his gracious design from eternity: therefore they are said to be *called according to his purpose*. The great Jehovah in all his dealings towards his people in time, acts according to the pattern that was in his mind from eternity.

(3.) God's love of *complacence*, is that whereby he *delights in the work of his own Spirit wrought in his people*, Cant. iv. These three last I take to be the *love* meant in our text. We find this fourth general head ushered in with a double emphasis, *viz.* a note of attention, and a note of admiration.

[1.] A note of *attention*, *id est, behold*; *ab eis video*, to see, to lift up the eyes of the mind to behold a thing more accurately and intently, as we lift up the eyes of the body to behold any remarkable object that occurs. This note of attention is used in a fourfold scope, (1.) To awaken the at-

tention, *Isai. lxxv. 1. I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* The universal depravation of our deplorable natures renders us totally averse to good ; so that such shocking memento's are most necessary for us, to rouse us from our lethargic drouse. (2.) To excite *admiration*, from the beholding some new and admirable thing, *Isai. vii. 14. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son-----* (3.) To show the *certainty* of a thing spoken, *Rev. i. 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him-----*

(4.) To show the *excellency* and *necessity* of a thing, *John i. 29 Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.*

[2.] A note of *admiration* : *what manner of love,* ἡ ἀγάπη. This word is used both to denote the quantity and quality of a thing, *Matth. viii. 27.* It is as if the apostle had said, What kind, what sort of love is this ? surprising, amazing love ! There is a vehement emphasis in this expression of astonishment and transport. Hereby the apostle plainly shows, that the love of God is exceedingly apparent, and marvellously manifested in adoption. What ! for an all-sufficient, self-sufficient, independent Jehovah, to adopt a *stranger* into his family, a *rebel* into his bosom ? Is it not stupendous, transporting love ? This is proposed by way of interrogation or question, but implies a vehement assertion. It is as if the apostle, feeling himself incapable to comprehend this immeasurable ocean of divine love, addressed himself to believers in a kind of amaze, and said, Do you yourselves speak or judge, if you can, what kind of love this is. It is deep, I cannot fathom it ; broad and wide, I cannot comprehend it : sure it is infinite love, well becoming the infinitely glorious Majesty from whom it flows. *Behold what manner of love the Father bath*

hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

From the words thus explained we observe,

That the superlative love of God is transcendently displayed in the adopting strangers into his family, and giving them the privilege of sons.

In treating upon this observation, I would endeavour, by divine assistance, to speak to these three particulars, viz.

First, Explain the nature and kinds of adoption.

Secondly, Show the prerogatives and consequent privileges which flow from it.

Thirdly, Shew how exceedingly the love of God is displayed in it.

And, *Lastly*, Shall endeavour to improve it (if God will) to our edification.

First. As to the first proposed, I conceive *adoption* may be thus described, that it is a gracious declaration of the blessed God, whereby he admits and receives those, who were by nature strangers and enemies in heart and life to his Majesty, but now, through grace, are effectually called, justified, regenerated and united to Christ, into his family as sons, and communicates to them the privileges of children.

I shall endeavour to explain the several parts of this description. And,

1. *Adoption is a declaration*; so says our text, *called the sons of God*. This declaration is expressed four ways,

(1.) By *eternal election*, or that everlasting purpose in the divine mind, *Eph. i. 5. He having predestinated us unto the adoption of children*. In this respect, the elect before their conversion (by a certain figure of speech, *prolepsis*) are called the children of God, John xi. 52.

(2.) By

(2.) By *redemption in Jesus*, with whom they are united, *Gal. iii. 26. For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.*

(3.) By the *gospel, and its copious, precious promises*, whereby believers have ascribed to them that ample dignity of son-ship, *John 1. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

(4.) In their *own spirits*, or consciences. There God testifies by his Spirit that they are his children; partly, by *conferring* certain evidences of adoption, and partly, by *irradiating* their minds to perceive and acknowledge these evidences, and therefrom to infer their adoption.

2. *A declaration of God.* He is the cause of it, or the person adopting; generally, the *divine essence*, but more particularly and specially, according to the *divine æconomy, God the Father*, to whom it is specially appropriated in our text. It is a father's property to have children: hence that memorable saying of the apostle to the *Ephesians*, chap. iii. 15. *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.* But it is also ascribed to the Son to have children, *Heb. ii. 10.* he is said to *bring many sons to glory*; and also to the holy Spirit, who in this regard, is called *the spirit of adoption*, *Rom. viii. 15.*

3. *A merciful and gracious declaration*; flowing freely from the unmerited goodness and superlative love of an infinite J A H, without the least regard to the creature's desert. The intrinsic, impulsive cause, is the peerless bounty and inexpressible love of God, as our text plainly voucheth. The extrinsic meritorious cause of this inestimable privilege, is the spotless merit of the only begotten Son of God, the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, *Eph. i. 5, 6.* Our Jesus assumed human nature in an hypostatical union with the divine,
and

and subjected himself, as man, to the law he made as God, that we might obtain the adoption of children, *Gal. iv. 4, 5. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

4. The *efficient cause* is the *Holy Spirit*. It is he who by his *sacred* and *secret whispers*, seals the people of God to the day of redemption.

5. The *instrumental cause* is the *word of God*. The soul-enriching promises of the blessed gospel, through which *golden conduit* is conveyed to believers the *oil of gladness*, and a *sure hope*, which makes them rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

6. The *final cause* is *God's glory*, principally bewrayed in his people's imitation of him, *Eph. v. 1. Be ye followers of God as dear children.* But then,

7. The *object* of this divine adopting declaration, is *poor sinful man*. Here let us briefly ruminate on their twofold estate, *viz. their former and present condition.*

(1.) As to their former or natural condition, (1.) They were such as were *total strangers* to God, far from the knowledge of him, far from an interest in him. (2.) *Implacable and revengeful enemies* to his sacred Majesty, and that both in heart and life. Their thoughts of him were ungenerous, groveling, or blasphemous; wholly unsuitable to his *dignity and glory*. In their lives, they industriously prosecuted this hereditary *spleen* with basest *virulency* and heat, constantly defacing the broken *shreds* of the divine *image* in their breasts: thus he, who in his pristine bliss was the *crown* and *garland* of this *globe*, is by his fall become more abject and sordid than the most ignominious *reptile* that crawls on earth. *This they were.* But,

(2.) As to their present condition, they are thro' grace,

grace, *effectually* called out of their former security. *He hath called us with an holy calling*, says the apostle. They are united to Christ by faith, *justified*, &c. *Rom. viii. 1.* These works of the Spirit do necessarily, as preparatives, precede adoption. Adoption is no part of justification, but an illustrious degree of dignity annexed to it. So that,

8. The *manner of our adoption* is, (1.) By *regeneration*, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature; not in its *essence*, but gracious *qualities*, justice, holiness, goodness, &c. *Col. iii. 10.* and receive principles of life, to enable us to live to God. “This (saith Mr. *Burkitt*) is an inward principle, an universal principle, a God-exalting principle, an abiding principle.” (2.) By *union with Christ*. While we are mystically united to him, we are rendred his brethren, having one father with him; so that though Jesus, in regard of his natural and eternal generation, be the only first-born, yet through this blessed union, his people have that honourable name, *Heb. xii. 23. The church of the first-born.*

9. The *terms of our adoption*. We are brought from darkness, and the dominion of sin and satan, into the family of the blessed God, and made household friends and children. Henceforward God carries towards us as a father, yea, as a kind indulgent father, and takes us under the gracious *wings* of his *divine protection*. He directs us and provides for us, so that we *securely* and *safely* rest in the *bosom* of his *almighty power* and *goodness*.

10. There be *two kinds of adoption*, divine and human. The first, we have in some sort treated of. The second, viz. *human adoption*, may be described thus, to be an *act of love* or *compassion*, ordinarily arising from the want of children, whereby a person admits an alien or stranger into his family, and communicates

municates to him a right to his goods or estate, to be enjoyed by him after his decease. In this brief description, we may gather the main differences between a divine and human adoption.

(1.) They differ in their *source* and *original*. A human adoption is generally occasioned by the defect of a natural offspring; but the divine flows from the abundance of God's goodness.

(2.) In the persons *adopted*. In human adoption they are strangers, or such as have no right to adoption; but in the divine, though by nature they are strangers and aliens, *Eph. ii. 12.* yet through grace they are called and justified, and consequently have a right to the blessed inheritance, even before the adopting act.

(3.) They differ in *their nature*. The human being but an external denomination and bequeathment of temporal goods; whereas the divine consists in a real act of Jehovah, whereby he confers on his people spiritual *life* and *holiness*, the very *transcript* of his own *nature*.

(4.) The human confers the inheritance to the adopted, after the adopter's death; but the divine confers it while both *survive*. But I proceed to the

Second proposed, which was, to show the *prerogatives and consequent privileges of adoption*.

I will not here essay to enumerate all and singular of them, only the more *eminent* and *special*. And,

1. An *honourable and amiable denomination*, is one of the privileges of adoption. *They shall be called the sons of God, John i. 12.* As those who are humanly adopted, in a civil sense, bear the name of their adopting father; so those that are spiritually or divinely adopted, bear the name of their celestial father, as our text testifies. Jesus is their elder brother, they are not only called friends, but children. This is not an empty name, but the thing named

is

is, in some measure, conferred, *viz.* the image of God, 2 *Pet.* i. 4.

2. The *dominion over*, and *possession* of the creatures ; in as much as God not only created them for them, but hath given them a right to them. In Christ all things are ours, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21. Many earthly things are properly and proximately in our power, many, though at a distance, serve us ; the sun, moon and stars, yea, the angelic spirits, those nobles of the court of heaven above, *serve believers*, *Psal.* xxxiv. 7. Even *penal evils*, through the *mysterious guidance of divine providence*, promote their good. They have the free (but lawful) use of all terrene enjoyments. *To the pure all things are pure*, *Tit.* i. 15.

3. *Conformity* to the son of God by a communion of his prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal dignity, *Rev.* i. 6.

4. A fourth privilege of adoption, is *christian liberty*. A temporal son in a family hath a freedom above a servant ; Jesus hath purchased a spiritual freedom for his children, at the cost of his dearest blood, *Gal.* v. 1. which contains these things,

(1.) A freedom from the *guilt of sin*, obtained by justification, confirmed and applied by adoption.

(2.) A freedom from the *dominion of sin*, by sanctification, *Rom.* iv. 14.

(3.) From the *condemnation of the moral law*, *Gal.* iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

(4.) From the *yoke of the ceremonial law*, which was nailed to Christ's cross.

(5.) From *human traditions and institutions in God's worship*, *Col.* ii. 20, 21, 22.

5. Another privilege is, the *spirit of adoption*, to which is opposed the *spirit of bondage*, *Rom.* viii. 15. Now this spirit of adoption hath a twofold operation.

(1.) To

(1.) To ascertain us of our *son-ship*. Hence it is said, that *the Spirit testifies with our spirit*, or conscience, *that we are the sons of God*. And this the Spirit effectuates these three ways, (1.) By proposing signs and marks of a *gracious work*, in the word. (2.) By working that work *in the heart*. (3.) By enabling the soul, by comparing both together, to discern it's *gracious state*.

Altho' I solidly believe, that ordinarily "*certitudo argumentatione reflexioneque acquiritur*," as one says, Assurance is acquired by argumentation and reflexion; and tho' I do abhor the delusory *dreams* of the enthusiastic *croud*, who depend, as it were, upon *auricular voices* and immediate *speeches* from *heaven*, without duly attending to, and comparing themselves with the written word: yet I conceive, that it is a bold and dangerous meddling, to limit the *power* or *ways* of *omnipotence* to men's *narrow imaginations*. In a word, I think what holy *Rutherford*, affectionate *Ambrose*, and a thronging croud of other godly divines, that God doth persuade some souls immediately, by the light of his Spirit working upon their hearts a sense of their interest in his love: but then they ought to, and will, try this by the written word, with it's effects, to know it's divine birth. We read of the *sealing* of the *Spirit*, and sure the *seal* leaves it's *signature*. I know that some divines, of no small figure, oppose this. I shall not assume the arrogance to tarnish the *character* of those great men; only, I would venture to say, that I believe many incline to *speak* and *write* as it suits their own experience best. But not to insist.

(2.) The second operation of the Spirit is that by which he *enables* the children of God, to cry, with a filial boldness, *Abba, Father*, or, *Father, Father*, for so the word *Abba* signifies in the *Syriac*, saith Mr. *Pool*. This ingemination plainly shows
the

the vehemence of believers affection to God, when they are persuaded of his love to them. A certain school-man observes, that "the *Jews* would not suffer their servants to call *Father*," but God suffers his children, in all their *pressures* and *difficulties*, yea, in all their *solemn approaches*, to claim this filial relation to himself. O never enough to be admired love ! well might the apostle, as in a maze, cry out, *Behold, what manner of love is this !*

6. A sure *title* to the heavenly inheritance, with the first-fruits and earnest of it here, are the blessed privileges of *adoption*, Rom. viii. 17. *And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ*. They do inherit God himself ; their father is their *full* and *final portion*. "A man leaves his heirs what he has, (says Mr. *Burkitt*) "but God leaves his heirs what he is." All his attributes are for their benefit ; his wisdom is theirs, to guide them ; his power, to protect and defend them ; his mercy and love, to support and refresh them. *Heirs with Christ* : he is the heir of God, and believers in him. "They are members of Christ, (saith Mr. *Burkitt*) and shall be heirs with him." In Jesus they have obtained the inheritance : by adoption they have also the earnest of this inheritance, Eph. i. 13, 14. *In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise ; which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.*

Thirdly. We advance now to the prosecution of the third thing proposed, which was, to show *how exceedingly the love of God is displayed in adoption.*

These four particulars demonstrate this truth :
 1. The person adopting. 2. The persons adopted. 3. The impulsive cause of adoption. 4. The price of adoption.

1. The

1. The *person adopting*. Who is this? The great and glorious God. But for illustration, let us passingly view these four properties of the blessed God.

(1.) His *Majesty and divine glory*. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the sovereign ruler of princes, that inaccessible light which no man can approach unto, and live. The angels, those winged seraphs of the court above, veil their faces before the dazzling splendor of his glory. Is not this the sun which beautifies and illuminates the empyreal heavens, and delights all the sons of Zion, that church of the first-born, with perpetual and sweet transports? What creature breathing can sufficiently describe this glory? even a Moses must be hid in the rock, and discern only the darkest glances of it. The psalmist, when he beheld through the liquid æther, the starry heaven, and view'd the workmanship of the mighty God therein, *Psal. viii. 3.* he was justly seized with a rapture of amazement, and cries out, *What is man that thou art mindful of him?* And can we not, shall we not wonder with him, that a God of such august and serene Majesty, and transcendent glory, should adopt such as we are? O how marvellously does the love of God shine in this adopting act!

(2.) His *independency and sovereignty*. He is the independent and self-existent cause of all created beings; *all things were created by him, and without him was not any thing made that is made.* He could have made another species of creatures than man, declaratively to express his praises: but he not only made man happy in his primitive endowments, but when he had lost himself, through grace adopts him into his family.----

(3.) His *all-sufficiency and self-sufficiency*. He has all things within the compass of his perfect essence, whereby he is infinitely happy and blessed. "He
" stands

“ stands in no more need of man, (saith one) than
 “ the superior globes, of a fly, to roll them round
 “ their respective circles ; or the massy earth of a
 “ grasshopper to support it ; or the moon of an a-
 “ tom to enlighten it. ” His essential and prime-
 val glory is stable, permanent and eternal, and can
 receive no additional *perfections* from the *creatures*,
 nor suffer any *diminution* by them. If Jehovah had
 expected any additional glory from his creatures, it
 must doubtless have sullied and eclipsed the bright-
 ness of his *love* : but seeing there can be no such
 thing, O how apparently, how sweetly, how tran-
 scendently, does the divine affection shine !-----

(4.) His *justice* and *sanctity*. Angels and tri-
 umphing saints justly cry out, *Holy, holy, holy Lord*
God of hosts ! He charges his angels with folly. The
very heavens are not clean in his sight. Now, that
 such a holy, sin-hating God should adopt rebels in-
 to his family, how amazing ! how astonishing is it !
 But we proceed to consider,

2. The *persons adopted* : not the great and no-
 ble, 1 Cor. i. 26. Let us a little perpend these
 things relating to them.

(1.) Their *frailty*. What is man but dust and
 ashes, a worm, a moth, an atom ? *Job xxv. 6.*

(2.) *Impotency*. They can do nothing, either to
merit, or suitably *requite* such *adopting love* ; his best
 performances are corrupted, and of no advantage to
 Jesus.

(3.) Their *poverty*. They are by nature poor,
Rev. iii. 17. they have neither food nor raiment,
 and in debt besides.

(4.) *Deformity*. They are deformed by nature,
 and that not only *privatively*, by the want of *beau-*
ty, but also *positively*, by the *presence* of a spreading
leprosy. The soul, in our apostate state, as to it's
 qualities, is not only void of it's pristine *beauty* and
 pri-

primeval glory, but also filled with a hateful *proclivity* to violate the commands of God. Is it not astonishing, that the *love* of God should *terminate* on such *deformity*?

(5.) *Enmity*, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God-----* The soul of man is naturally as full of *enmity* against God, as a *toad* is of *poison*. Sure, 'tis a wonder that God should love such *enemies* so much, as to take them into his *bosom*.

- 3. The *impulsive cause* of adoption is not any *dignity* or *merit* in us, but the pure, incomprehensible, and eternal *love* of God. What a wonder of love is this!

4. As to the *price* of our adoption: it was not *purchased* with *silver* or *gold*, but with the *precious blood* of the Son of God, as of a *lamb* without spot; not with a great sum of money, which the chief captain purchased his freedom with, *Acts* xxii. 18. nor with abundance of the foreskins of the *Philistines*, whereby *David* purchased his son-ship from the king, *1 Sam.* xviii. 27. no: the Son of God must descend from the bosom of his Father, and assume the nature of man, and have his glory veiled in a mantle of *flesh*. *Jesus* must be humbled and abased to the *death*, yea, must become a *curse* and *sin* for us, that we might obtain eternal blessedness.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

USE I. This truth we have insisted on may serve for an use of *Admiration*. This seems to be the use the apostle himself makes of it. It was meer condescension in *Pharaoh's* daughter to preserve *Moses*, an innocent babe and a stranger, from perishing by water: but, O how much greater kindness was it in almighty God, to save guilty wretched man from perishing by eternal flames, and to take a rebel into his bosom! Did *Abigail* thus excuse herself, when but a refugee *David* proposed marriage to her, that *she was not worthy to wash the feet*

feet of the meanest servant of her lord? Good God! what may we say of God's taking sinful man into his family, and giving him the privileges of his children? may we not say with the prodigal, Lord, we are not worthy to be called thy children? From what, to what, has God brought believers? from what a deep degree of extreme misery, to what a height of dignity and glory? O! let us call to admiration our souls and all that is within us, at this blessed love, this free and undeserved love, this enriching and everlasting love! Did the angels wonder, when they brought the happy tidings of this love to the world? did they look with admiration into these things? and will not our souls? Shall Sheba's queen wonder at the splendor and order of Solomon's court, and shall not we wonder at the privileges here conferred? What! to be brought freely from darkness to light, from the basest slavery to the most honourable liberty; from being heirs of hell, to be heirs of heaven; from being children of Satan to be children of God, to have familiarity and child-like boldness with the highest. Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth, at this!

USE II. Of examination. If there be so many happy privileges annexed to son-ship, we should examine ourselves by the *marks and signs* of it. Some of which preceed adoption. Such as,

1. *Effectual calling.* (1.) Have we heard and obeyed God's calls by his word and Spirit? (2.) Are we converted from sin to God? *John* iii. 5, 6. (3.) Have we received Jesus as he is offered, by a lively faith? *John* i. 12.

2. Some are concomitants of adoption, and some follow after it. As (1.) *Child-like love.* (2.) *Child-like fear and reverence to God*, as a father, *Mat.* i. 6. *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master.* (3.) *Child-like boldness and access to God*, as

a father, crying, *Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. (4.) *Fraternal affection* to all the faithful, as being children of the same father: 1 John v. 1. *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* Yea even love to personal enemies, *Matth. v. 45.* (5.) *Child-like obedience*, whereby we aspire after the *image of God*, Acts xxvii. 23. and his *gracious presence*, *Psal. xvi. 8.*

USE III. Of comfort to the children of God. Look to the great privileges God has given you by adoption. (1.) *Your name is changed.* You have the *new name*, and the *hidden manna*. (2.) You are *advanced to honourable relations.* God is your *father*, and *Christ* your *elder brother* and *husband*. (3.) You are through grace, brought to a happy state, *born of God, made partakers of the divine nature, made kings and priests to God*, Rev. i. 6. *Privatively*, ye are freed from the guilt and power of sin. *Positively*, ye are made partakers of all things, 1 Cor. iii. 21. *All things shall work for your good*, Rom. viii. 28. God hath a fatherly care over your souls, he blesteth you with all spiritual blessings, he will not let sin rule over you, yea, he bears your offences as a father his child, *Mal. iii. 17.* He will *comfort* you in your *straits*, *instruct* you in your *doubts*, and *support* you in your *weaknesses*. As to your *bodies*, your *bread and your water is sure*: he that *bears the ravens*, and *clothes the lillies*, will not be *deaf* to your *cries*. If the Lord afflicts you, he doth it not willingly from his heart, but as a tender father, that you may not perish with the world, who are fed for the slaughter, and whose tables are their snares. He pities his lambs in affliction, and hears their sighs and groans. *Psal. ciii. 13.* *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* He gives you an interest in a crown that shall never fade away. May not then the chil-

children of God rejoice in their *blessed* and *bountiful Lord*?

USE IV. Of *terror* to all such as are not the adopted sons of God, but the sons of Belial.

But who are these?

1. You that never have been *effectually called* from *sin*, nor throughly convinced of the vileness of it: tho' it may be you have heard the word of God often, yet it hath not to this day been as a *two-edged sword* to you.

2. You who have never had your *hearts opened* to receive *Jesus*, and who have no communion with the father, through him: for, says the apostle of the children of God, *1 John i. 3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

3. All you that are *openly profane*, of what sort or denomination soever.

4. All you *Gallio's*. The time is coming when you shall be spued out of the mouth of God. Sure, the misery of such men, without repentance, will be exceeding great in the day of God's power; for, if they remain such, they shall be everlastingly *secluded* from all the *forementioned benefits*, and be made *possessors* of *contrary miseries*. Instead of *love*, ye shall have *hatred*; instead of *singing* with *angels*, ye must take up with the *soul-tormenting embraces* of *grievous flames*, and *howlings* everlastingly with those that perish; as ye shall not enjoy the presence of God, so ye shall be sent away with a curse, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* O that such would awake and seek for help, while mercy is tendered in the gospel!

USE V. Of *exhortation*. O let us seek to obtain this blessed privilege and dignity, *adoption*.

1. It is *possible, probable, yea*, it may be certainly attained

attained, according to God's firm and stable promise, *1 Cor.* vi. 17. *John* i. 12. and the experience of God's children.

2. The *mean* to attain it is plainly prescribed, which is both rational and easy, to receive Christ by faith, *John* i. 12.

3. It is an *honourable privilege*.

4. It is a *profitable privilege*. How great is the happiness of those who have the shines of the face of God, and his perpetual protection.

5. It is a necessary privilege, universally and absolutely necessary ; without it, we must be miserable in time, and in eternity. Does it not then highly deserve our pains to obtain it ?

I shall conclude with a few directions. And,

1. To the people of God that want the sense of this mercy. Some things are to be avoided, and some things are to be done.

As to the things that are to be avoided, (1.) Beware of gross sins against the light of your minds ; for God is engaged to correct his wandering children. Those sins grieve the Spirit, and hinder his sealing-work ; those sins bring spiritual desertions, and cause us to mourn with *David*, *Psal.* li. (2.) Beware of the neglect of secret prayer. (3.) Beware of sloth. (4.) Of pride.

Now, that which is to be performed is, (1.) The exercise of faith on Jesus ; that being united to him, by the help of union with him, we may obtain son-ship. And to this end, we must use all the means that increase faith ; such as the word, prayer, the sacraments, and spiritual conference. (2.) The exercise of repentance for sins of infirmity. (3.) Lessen not the work of the Spirit within you ; but be thankful for the smallest discoveries of your father's face. But,

2. To those that have obtained the sense of this

bleſſed privilege. (1.) Exerciſe child-like fear, love and zeal for your *Father's honour*. Let *love* be the *ſpring* of all your *performances*. (2.) Submit to your *Father's will* and pleaſure. 1. To his *preceptive will*: let a child's obedience run through all the *veins* of your whole *converſation*. 2. To his *providential will*: learn in *every ſtate*, *therewith* to *be content*: submit to your *Father's chaſtning*: kiſs with reverence his *ſacred rod*. Tho' there be *frowns* in his *face*, yet there is *love* in his *heart*. (3.) *Conſide* and *truſt* in his fatherly *care*, for he *careth* for you. (4.) *Love* and *help* the children of God, as being children of the ſame *Father*.

Now, upon the faithful and perſevering performance of theſe, and the other neceſſary duties, God in his own bleſſed time, will *help* you to the full ſenſe of that your ſouls *longs* for, *viz.* your *adoption*: ſo that, *working out your ſalvation with fear and trembling*, you will at laſt be received with a *Well done, good and faithful ſervants*, and enter thoſe *triumphant regions*, where ſinging eternal *requiems* will be your everlaſting *work*; conſtantly *admiring*, with the *glorified ſaints*, the *amazing love* that brought you there, and will have juſt occaſion to ſay with the apoſtle in our text, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God*.



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